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Marriage: Refreshing The Basics



PRETORIA NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH

The Bible Basics of Marriage

Genesis 2:18-25

Introduction:

- In talking about the Bible Basics of the Family it is mainly to talk about the basic family relationship(s) that exist in the family and there are only two basic family relationships namely: Husband and Wife; Parent and Child.
- The family is made up of this relationships and without these relationships, the absence of both, there is basically no family.
- It is my aim to proof to you in this study, from Scripture, and through that to teach us the truth that:

***The most basic family relationship is the MARRIAGE relationship.
Bible Basics of the Family starts with the Bible Basics about MARRIAGE!***

- Our culture is questioning the whole idea of marriage.
- There is an online debate on **DEBATE.org** about the question: *Is marriage important?*
- The voting on this debate reveals that of those participating in this debate, only **33% says YES**, marriage is important... **67% says NO**, marriage is not important...
- Here is some of the reasons why they say it isn't important:
 - *There is no benefits to marriage...*
 - *It's just a piece of paper...*
 - *Life is too short, no need to trap yourself...*
 - *Marriage is a total waste when you have lots more to do in life...*
 - *You don't have to get married to show someone that you love them...*
 - *Marriage isn't necessary but it's beneficial...*
- As you can gather, it is all very self-centred and selfish reasons based on a pragmatic understanding of marriage and no moral convictions being present that it is the right things to do according to the Bible, according to what God says...
- What scared me even further is to read why those who voted YES says that marriage is important:
 - *It is in keeping with tradition...*
 - *It is good when two consenting adults, not necessarily male and female, come together to strive for the same common goal namely: LOVE!*
 - *It is practically beneficial concerning taxes, property rights, medical aid, etc...*
- There was only ONE comment that I could find quickly, the very first one, that said that marriage was ordained by God. He created man and saw that he was alone and it wasn't good, so God made a helper for man and that is why marriage is important, because God ordained it!
- In an article in the *New York Times* of **April 27, 2013** where the questions is posed "*Why do people still bother to marry?*", they come to the following conclusion: "*This is not to say that marriage is less important than it was in the past. But it is important for different reasons. In the mid-20th century, there was nothing exceptional about marriage. Respectable people married; there was no other decent way to share a home with a partner. Shame attached to those who bore children out of wedlock. Spinsters and bachelors were suspect, the subject of collective social wonder. Today, marriage is more discretionary than ever, and also more distinctive. It is something young adults do after they and their live-in partners have good jobs and a nice apartment. It has become the capstone experience of personal life — the last brick put in place after everything else is set. People marry to show their family and friends how well their lives are going, even if deep down they are unsure whether their partnership will last a lifetime...*"
- In the midst of all this confusion and pragmatic viewpoints and selfish, self-centred understanding of marriage, we need to reassert that marriage is important because of what the **BIBLE**, what **GOD** says about marriage!
- Before the historical church was instituted, before the first state was instituted, **GOD INSTITUTED MARRIAGE** and the **FAMILY** as the **MOST BASIC INSTITUTION IN A SOCIETY...!**
- A **HEALTHY CHURCH**, a **HEALTHY SOCIETY** is made up of **HEALTHY FAMILIES** and at its core, healthy families are made up of healthy **MARRIAGES... Marriage is the most basic family relationship...!**

• **Q: What DOES GOD say about marriage...?**

Study Points:

1. The Basics that need to be Reasserted.

1.1 GOD ORDAINED marriage!

• **Gen 2:18-25**

- Not an option left open for man to choose if it is important or not.
- It is God's divine design from the very beginning and not a manmade thing that people of old have come up with. It is therefore not just an empty tradition, but it is to obey God and submit to His wise design for us.
- God ordained marriage to be a **COVENANT**, a lifelong commitment not based on feeling but on promise.
- **Prov 2:17; Mal 2:14** – in both these passages we find that God views marriage as a covenant and that the breaking of this covenant brings great displeasure to Him and invokes His anger and punishment.
- We need to have a very high view of marriage because **GOD** has a very high view of marriage...!

1.2 Marriage is GOOD!

- God instituted marriage **BEFORE** the fall and so we see that it was God's perfect design from the very beginning, when nothing has been stained and warped by sin.
- It is designed by God for the **GOOD** of man.
- In understanding the **PURPOSES** of marriage it helps us to understand how marriage is **GOOD**:
 - 1) **Marriage is to provide COMPANIONSHIP – Gen 2:18**
 - Man in his perfect state was incomplete without the woman
 - Everything was good except that man was alone.
 - God created the woman to be the helper of the man and to complete him and be completed by him.
 - From the beginning man was created with the need for companionship and in marriage that need is met.
 - This is the primary purpose of marriage if we were to single out a primary purpose...!
 - 2) **Marriage is to BRING FORTH CHILDREN – Gen 1:27-28**
 - It is in the context of marriage that God blessed Adam and Eve so that they may bring forth children.
 - Children and family is a blessing from God.
 - It is God's design that children should come forth out of the marriage relationship and to a certain extent stand as the evidence of the love and commitment that a husband and wife have towards each other.
 - 3) **Marriage is to provide us with LOVING INTIMACY and in so doing to GUARD AGAINST SEXUAL IMMORALITY.**
 - **1 Cor 7:2** – Marriage is to guard us against living sexual immoral lives.
 - **Prov 5:15-19; Gen 26:8** – *“sporting, caressing, hugging and kissing, making love”* - God designed sexual intimacy for the marriage and it is to be enjoyed in the context of the marriage.
 - Marriage is good and sex is good... sex is not sinful, but designed by God as one of the most intimate expressions of love between a husband and a wife.
 - But it is **ONLY** in marriage that sex is good and **NOWHERE ELSE!**
 - Many Christians are negative about sex because sex is used in a sinful way by people.
 - Sex is holy, righteous and undefiled unless perverted by sin.
 - **Heb 13:4; 1 Thess 4:3-5**
- Marriage then is **GOOD** and is the normal way of life – that is how God has designed us.
- We should guard then against a misunderstanding of **1 Cor 7** and argue that Paul is saying that celibacy is **BETTER** than marriage, because that is not what he is doing, he can't be doing that because then he would be going against God's perfect design... Scripture needs to interpret Scripture and the Bible cannot contradict itself.
- In **verse 6-7** Paul states that it is a **GIFT** from God **NOT** to marry.
- Celibacy is a **GIFT** – it is God granting grace to someone to live as incomplete!
- What Paul is further arguing is that in times of persecution, that he foresees was coming to the Corinthian church, he says it is better for those times to remain as you are – **verse 25-27**... if unmarried stay so!
- We gather from the rest of Paul's letters that he did have a very high view of marriage, we see this especially in **Eph 5:22-33** and it is in this passage that we find the last purpose of marriage that I want to draw our attention to and that is...

4) Marriage reveal to us the mystery of the ONENESS THERE IS BETWEEN JESUS AND HIS CHURCH!

- Marriage here on earth is to give us a foretaste, a glimpse of the eternal marriage that exists between Jesus and His Church!
- It is to give us a small taste of the intimacy that we will one day experience in all its fullness in heaven!
- Marriage is the most basic family relationship because it reveals to us the most basic relationship that will one day exist in heaven...!

2. The Blueprint that needs to be understood.

- **Gen 2:24** is the most important verse to help us discern God's blueprint for marriage.
- This statement about marriage is included four times in the Bible:
- **Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; Eph 5:31**
- Once before man fell into sin and three times after man fell into sin...
- It **WAS** and **STILL IS** God's blueprint for marriage...

• Q: *What is the blueprint?*

1) It is to be between a MAN and a WOMAN!!

- **Gen 2:24** is **CLEAR** that it is about a **MAN** leaving his parents and then cleaving to his **WIFE**, namely a woman.
- Also note that it is in the singular, helping us understand it is between **ONE** man and **ONE** woman.

THREE KEYWORDS then remain to reveal this blueprint:

2) "Leave" (**Gen 2:24a**)

- It means to loosen, depart from, leave behind...
- It is not to abandon or forsake your parents altogether, but there must be an effective leaving of them to establish a new decision making entity, a new family...
- It is not just moving away – can be a thousand kilometres away and never leave...
- There must be a radical change in your **RELATIONSHIP** with your parents:
 - It must become an adult relationship – not child-parent but adult-adult.
 - You must be concerned with the ideas, opinions and practices of your mate above that of your parents.
 - You are not to be dependent on your parents for affection, approval, assistance and counsel.
 - You need to eliminate any bad attitude towards your parents so that you won't be tied emotionally to them.
 - You must not try and change your mate so that your parents will approve of him/her more!
- **To leave your father and mother means to make the husband and wife relationship your priority human relationship!**
- **It must be your priority relationship above ANY OTHER human relationships – be it friends or family or child-parent...!**
- The child-parent relationship is **NOT**, at any stage, to be more important or prominent than the husband-wife relationship!
- The child-parent relationship is temporary – you should "*leave*" your parents...
- The husband-wife relationship is permanent – "*hold fast*" or "*cleave*"...
- It is what remains when the children leave.
- Many children leave their parents' house and don't know how to be good husbands and wife's because they didn't see their parents being a good husband and wife to each other...!
- One plaque says: "*The best way to be a good father to your children is to be a good husband to their mother.*"
- Parents should prepare for their children to leave by cultivating common interests, learning to do things together and by deepening your friendship and fellowship with each other...
- Quick question to all those who have children in the house: ***If your children would leave RIGHT NOW, where would that leave your marriage...?***
- I think it is good for parents to be excited about their children leaving one day so that they can spend more time together...!

3) “Hold fast” or “Cleave” (**Gen 2:24b**)

- It means to cling, stick, follow closely, join to.
- Marriage is a **PERMANENT** relationship – **Mark 10:7-9**
- It is not a matter of convenience but rather of **OBEDIENCE!**
- It is a promise, a covenant, to be faithful, to commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems may arise.
- It is to decide not to make divorce even an option!
- God’s kind of marriage involves a total and irrevocable commitment of two people to each other.
- Being committed to one another for life and cleaving to one another today, tomorrow and as long as they shall live...!

4) “One flesh” (**Gen 2:24c**)

- On the most basic and physical level, this refers to the marriage act of sexual intimacy, but it refers to much more than that only...!
- This refers to the total sharing that needs to happen in a marriage.
- A great definition of marriage is: **“Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.”**
- Marriage is to share **EVERYTHING** – our bodies, possessions, sufferings, ideas, joys, time, etc...
- When there is problems regarding sexual intimacy one of the root things may be that there is not true oneness in the other areas of the marriage.
- To a certain extent, sexual intimacy is a barometer for oneness in a marriage...
- There are many hindrances to oneness in a marriage and most if not all of them ties back to one concept: **SIN...!**
- Sin is what destroyed oneness in the garden of Eden and it still destroys marriages today.
- The moment Adam and Eve sinned they began to cover up, to withdrew from one another – **Gen 3:7**
- Sins that hinders oneness includes: **Selfishness; Pride; Unwholesome speech; Bitterness; Ingratitude; Neglect; Impatience; Cruelty...** just to name a few.
- A Biblical successful marriage is where oneness is achieved in **ALL AREAS OF LIFE!**
- It is **THE** fight that we are to keep on fighting, that we are to strive for, which we need to evaluate ever so often for the sake of our relationship with Jesus, for the sake of our marriages, for the sake of our children, for the sake of our families, for the sake of our church, for the sake of our society...!
- If the husband-wife relationship is not healthy, all these other relationships will bear the effects and suffer the consequences.

Conclusion:

- **The secret to achieving a Biblical marriage is to not focus primarily on each other, but rather to place all your focus on Jesus Christ!**
- It is as you are growing towards becoming like Jesus and your spouse is growing to become more like Jesus that you are growing closer and closer to one another and ultimately achieving oneness in Jesus Christ!
- A healthy church, a healthy society is made up of healthy families and at its core, healthy families are made up of **HEALTHY MARRIAGES... marriages that is built upon Jesus Christ!**
- Is marriage important? **YES!!!**
- I end this study then with adapting one of the remarks about why marriage is important and making it Biblical:
- Remember the remark: **“It is good when two consenting adults, not necessarily male and female, come together to strive for the same common goal namely: LOVE...?”**
- Here is how it should be: **“It is VERY good when A MAN AND A WOMAN come together to strive for the same common goal namely: BECOMING LIKE JESUS CHRIST!”**

What's a Man to Do? Part 1

Ephesians 5:23

Introduction:

- In our previous study, we have seen God's design and purpose for marriage.
- In this study we will start focusing on the different **ROLES** that there is in the marriage for the husband and wife to fulfil and our focus for the next two studies will be: "*What's the MAN to do...?*"
- In contrast with what our culture says about being a man and highlighting what our culture completely neglects, it is refreshing to watch a movie like "*Courageous*" and see a good portrayal of what our understanding as Christians should be of what it means to be a **GODLY MAN**.
- I would like for you to read the "*Resolution*" that features in the film and what they are trying to portray throughout the film...

THE RESOLUTION

*I do solemnly resolve before God to take full responsibility for myself, my wife, and my children.
I WILL love them, protect them, serve them, and teach them the Word of God as the spiritual leader of my home.*

I WILL be faithful to my wife, to love and honour her, and be willing to lay down my life for her as Jesus Christ did for me.

I WILL bless my children and teach them to love God with all of their hearts, all of their minds, and all of their strength.

I WILL train them to honour authority and live responsibly.

I WILL confront evil, pursue justice, and love mercy.

I WILL pray for others and treat them with kindness, respect, and compassion.

I WILL work diligently to provide for the needs of my family.

I WILL forgive those who have wronged me and reconcile with those I have wronged.

I WILL learn from my mistakes, repent of my sins, and walk with integrity as a man answerable to God.

I WILL seek to honour God, be faithful to His church, obey His Word, and do His will.

I WILL courageously work with the strength God provides to fulfil this resolution for the rest of my life and for His glory.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. – Joshua 24:15

- What makes this "*Resolution*" so striking? It is based on **BIBLICAL** principles for what **GOD** designed a **MAN** to do and to be! This is why I believe when men hear this kind of thing, they want to stand up and say: "*I WILL!*"
- It resonates with our **DESIGN**, our **ROLE** as men.
- It is **VERY** important to understand and remember that God has designed men and women to have different **ROLES** in the marriage.
- This doesn't mean that there is a difference in **EQUALITY** between men and women, but a difference in **RESPONSIBILITY**.
- Man and woman stand equal before God in that they were both created in the image of God (cf. **Gen 1:27**)
- In Christ they stand equal before God and both are saved by grace - **Gal 3:28** (cf. **1 Pet 3:7**)
- The **ROLES** they have, have been assigned to them before the fall – **Gen 2:18**
- **A successful marriage happens when these roles are understood and lived out and it is in the living out of these roles that both the man and the woman are free to become what GOD designed them to be and experience true fulfilment as a man and woman!**
- Wayne Mack: "*When two people know, accept and fulfil their varying but complementary responsibilities, oneness in marriage is promoted*" and this is God's design from the marriage from the beginning.
- Much of the frustration, irritation, discontentment in marriages flows from ignorance of these roles, rebellion against these roles or just plain pathetic implementation of these roles...
- That being said, let us answer the question from the Bible, "*What is a MAN to do...?*"
- We will answer this question by focusing on one passage: **Eph 5:23, 25-33**...

Study Points:

- In this passage we find that the man or **HUSBAND** has basically **TWO PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**:
1) He is to be his wife's **LEADER**. (**v23**)

2) He is to be his wife's **LOVER**. (**v25-29**)

- We will only be able to cover the **FIRST RESPONSIBILITY** in this study...

1. The Husband as LEADER.

- The husband is to be the **HEAD** of his wife as Christ is the Head of the Church.
- To be the head means to be in the place of **DECISIONMAKING**, of **GIVING DIRECTION** and **IMPULSES** to the rest of the body, to be in **LEADERSHIP**.
- The husband gets his cue from looking to **JESUS** in how He is **HEAD** and **LEADER** of the **CHURCH** and the husband must copy or exemplify the leadership that **JESUS** exemplified.
- The **STYLE** of leadership that the husband must seek to achieve must be in following the style of leadership that Jesus exercised while living on earth.
- As in all areas of life, the life of Jesus is our **ULTIMATE EXAMPLE** and this is true also for the manner in which a husband is to be the **LEADER** of his wife – according to the style of leadership that Jesus practised...
- **Q: What style of leadership did Jesus practise?**
- **Matt 20:25-28; John 13:12-17; Phil 2:5-8** – Jesus was a **SERVANT LEADER**...!
- **We as husband's must have SERVANTS HEARTS that will enable us to act like servants and react like a servant when we are treated as one...!**
- To lead with this style of leadership is to understand that you must be your wife's, and your family's, biggest **SERVANT**...!
- **Everything you plan and do as a husband must be with her best interests at heart...!**
- Wayne Mack: *"You are to live for the sake of your wife...!"*
- **Q: HOW do we do this?**
- **JESUS** is our example so we need to look at how He led His disciples.

Jesus led His disciples through:

1) Frequent and Regular Companionship.

- Jesus spent great amounts of **TIME** with His disciples.
- Everywhere where He went, they were either **WITH HIM** or **CLOSE BY** – **Mark 1:17; 3:13-14**
- When you asked your wife to marry you, that is what you asked of her in effect to do – that she would be **WITH** you...
- Therefore Peter teaches us that we are to *"live"* or *"dwell"* with our wives – to reside together, be in one another's company... (**1 Pet 3:7**)
- ***You cannot lead your wife if you are not spending time with her!***

2) Careful and Relevant Instruction.

- Jesus led His disciples by **TEACHING** them.
- He did this in **FORMAL** ways by the way of sermons like the sermon on the mount in **Matt 5-7** and the one lengthy discourse we read of in **John 13-16**.
- Other times he did it in **INFORMAL** ways by responding to their questions and situations as they occurred...
- God longs and expects husbands to lead and serve their wives by teaching them...what?
- First and foremost what the Scripture says...!
- Husbands must be the **SPIRITUAL LEADERS** of their wives. They are to take **RESPONSIBILITY** for the spiritual development of their wives...
- This is what Paul was instructing the Corinthian church in **1 Cor 14:35** and later on what he taught Timothy concerning how the church as the household of God should function – **1 Tim 2:8-12**.
- The implication being here that **MEN** and in the context of marriage, a **HUSBAND**, should **TEACH** his wife and she should learn from him.
- For this to happen, ***we as men need to make sure that we are growing spiritually!***
- You need to have her **BEST INTEREST** at heart and this is why you are serving her as you grow spiritually and then teach her what you have learned and thereby leading her to become more like Christ...!
- A husband's **FIRST MINISTRY** is towards his **WIFE** – he must be able to **DISCIPLE** her before he would be able to disciple anyone else...!

3) Being a Good Example.

- Jesus called His disciples to *"Follow Him..."* – **Mark 1:17**
- Jesus left them an **EXAMPLE** to follow – **John 13:15**

- Men, this follows the instruction that you are to give your wives namely that you need to **PRACTISE** what you are preaching to them...!
- The disciples **SAW** how Jesus prayed, how he **QUOTED** and **APPLIED SCRIPTURE**, how He **STOOD UP** for the **TRUTH**, how He **TREATED** and **LOVED** the unlovable...
- Our wives needs to see the Gospel at **WORK** in our lives; they need to see how we are being **TRANSFORMED** by the Bible, how we are **GROWING** in the fruit of the Spirit.
- This is to serve as an **EXAMPLE** for our wives **AND** to earn their **RESPECT** and **WILLINGNESS** to submit under our leadership and instruction!
- Wayne Mack: *“Surely, the husband’s leadership means that he must strive to be an example, a model, a pattern of godliness, holiness, compassion, dedication and devotion to God.”*
- Now, the reality is that **NO MAN** will be able to be a **PERFECT EXAMPLE** to his wife, because only **JESUS** is perfect and we so very easily still stumble, we fail to be what we ought to be...
- But even in **FAILURE** we are to be **EXAMPLES** of how to treat our failure – **ASKING FORGIVENESS** and **MAKING RESTITUTION**; owning up to our **SHORTCOMINGS** and **NOT BLAMING** other people, circumstances or our personality for it and least of all our wives...
- We need to lead our wives by being **GOOD EXAMPLES** in **ASKING** for **FORGIVENESS**.

4) Making Decisions and Delegating Responsibility.

- Jesus is the one who made the **DECISIONS** of where He and disciples would go and what would be happening next and He also **DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY** to them to bring about what needs to happen, all the while never changing his style of leadership but remaining a servant leader...
- **Two examples: Mark 1:35-39; 6:7-13**
- There can only be **ONE** head in a marriage and that is to be the **MAN**...!
- The man needs to give **GREAT WEIGHT** to the **COUNSEL** and **OPINIONS** of his wife.
- In **DECISION MAKING** he is to gain and seek after her counsel, insight, perspective and knowledge giving **GREAT CONSIDERATION** to her **NEEDS, DESIRES** and **FEARS**, but in the end, there can only be **ONE** head who needs to make the decision **AND** make sure that it happens...!
- Many men are **NEGATING** their decision-making responsibility to their wives and has become **APATHETIC** and **PASSIVE** in decision-making in their marriage where most if not all of the decisions are made by their wives...
- This is not to say that men **CANNOT DELEGATE** certain decisions to their wives, especially in areas of their interest and desires and skills **BUT** men, we need to understand that God will not hold our wives accountable for the decisions regarding our marriage, he will hold **US ACCOUNTABLE** for them because He has appointed the man to be the **HEAD**, the **LEADER** of his wife!
- If the Springboks lose, the coach get fired... if your marriage is testimony of bad and unwise decisions, you are the one **ACCOUNTABLE** and to **BLAME**...not your wife...!
- You can delegate certain decisions and responsibilities, *but you cannot delegate your ROLE!*

5) Acting like a man!

- Many of the pictures that people like to portray Jesus with portrays Him as a very soft, over friendly, always clean, slender, almost non-offensive and non-threatening person...
- Yet, we read that Jesus grew up as a carpenter, working wood with his hands that probably gave Him a few muscles and a manly presence – don’t get me wrong, I’m not pressing for acting like men by blowing up some muscles, but pressing the fact that Jesus was a **MAN** and not a soft skinned boy.
- We find Jesus **STANDING UP** against the people using the temple as a market place and overturning the tables...and no one was resisting Him...
- We find Him **STANDING UP** against the Pharisees and **CONFRONTING** their wayward teachings in all manner of circumstances....
- Jesus **ACTED LIKE A MAN** in the greatest sense that He was standing for the **TRUTH** and not cowering back in fear of man!
- **1 Cor 16:13 = NB!**
- To be the **LEADER** of your wife means to **ACT LIKE A MAN** and **STAND** for what you **BELIEVE** and acting **IN LINE** with it – *doing what needs to be done!*
- I have David in mind who wasn’t a very big man physically, but showed himself to be more a man than all his brothers and even King Saul who stood out a heads length over all the other men when David **ACTED LIKE A MAN** and **CONFRONTED GOLIATH** and **STOOD UP** for what he believed in...!
- *Men, we need to stand up an act like men!*

- We need to take the **LEADERSHIP** that God has given us and we need to **LEAD** our wives in such a way that they will see the **POWER OF GOD** at work in us and that they will know that they can **REST SECURE** in our leadership because we will **STAND UP** for what we believe and know to be right and true...!
- The **CHRISTIAN HUSBAND** is a man who **STANDS** and **LIVE** for **WHAT HE BELIEVES IN**, a man who stand and live for **JESUS CHRIST** even when the rest of the culture won't do it...!

Conclusion:

- This then is what it means to be your wives **HEAD**, to be her **LEADER** – you must lead her by **Frequent and Regular Companionship**; by **Careful and Relevant Instruction**; by **Being a Good Example**; by **Making Decisions and Delegating Responsibility** and by **Acting like a man!**
- **If you are married, don't wait for someone to put you into leadership, YOU ARE A LEADER and you need to start acting like one by leading your wife and in so fulfil the role you have to fulfil as her servant leader...!**
- If you're not married yet, know that this is what God will require of you and start practising doing these things in the friendships that you are cultivating.
- In our next study we will see what it means to be your wives **LOVER**...

What's a Man to Do? Part 2 Ephesians 5:25-29

Introduction:

- In the previous study we started answering this question, “*What's a MAN to do...?*”, from **Eph 5:23-29** where we learned firstly that a man is to be the **HEAD**, the **LEADER** of His wife as Christ is the Head of the Church.
- Looking then at how **JESUS** functioned as **LEADER** we discovered that we are to be **SERVANT LEADERS** of our wives and families meaning that we must lead by **Frequent and Regular Companionship**; by **Careful and Relevant Instruction**; by **Being a Good Example**; by **Making Decisions and Delegating Responsibility** and by **Acting like a man!**
- That is the first of our **TWO FOLD RESPONSIBILITY** we have as a man: *The MAN is to be this wife's LEADER!*
- In this study, we will focus on the second half of our responsibility namely that : *The MAN is to be his wife's LOVER!*
- This doesn't stand apart from the first but is **IMPLIED** and **ASSUMED** by the first that we can actually sum the man's responsibility up by saying that the man is to be the **LOVING LEADER** of His wife...
- So in this study, is all about **LOVE**...!
- Our world is **LOVE** crazy...! Why do I say that? Well, just ask yourself what is the most popular topic that feature in secular songs...? **LOVE!**
- “*Love songs*” form the majority of the music market, especially in the Afrikaans industry...
- You have songs about falling in love, being under the spell of love, loving love, hating love, falling out of love, seeking for love, remembering your first true love, crying over your first true love, declaring your love to someone, etc etc.
- One would think with all these love songs going around that our society should be marked by loving relationships and loving marriages...and they are... **IF** you define love as all those songs define love...
- *Here is the first fundamental issue when it comes to love:* Most of our society have an **UNBIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING** of what love **REALLY** is...! I dare to say that there are even many Christians who have a **SKEWED UNDERSTANDING** of what true, Biblical love is.
- For many, when they say to someone they love them, they confuse **LUST** with **LOVE**. They have a physical craving for sexual relations and they then call it love.
- For the most people love is a **FEELING**... Love for them is when they have a liking or attraction to someone and that makes them feel good and happy.
- The whole idea of “*falling in love*” is just that – you see and meet someone that you are attracted to for various reasons and that makes you feel good and happy and all of a sudden... **YOU ARE IN LOVE**...!
- This kind of love is based on a **FEELING** and on some or other **ATTRIBUTE** of the person that someone is attracted to.

- Needless to say that what the **BIBLE** calls love is quite the contrary to what most people would understand as love.
- Love is **NOT** a **FEELING**, but an **ACT OF OUR WILL**... It is a **DECISION** that one make and then hold to!
- One of the greatest passages that define **LOVE** for us, is **1 Cor 13:4-7**.
- This kind of love is not something that we must **FALL** into, but rather something that we should **WALK IN!**
- **Eph 5:1-2**
- If you are not married yet, don't wait for Mr or Mrs "**right**" before you start loving. As a Christian you are to **WALK IN LOVE** in every single friendship that you are in. If you can't do it to them, you won't be able to do it to your wife or husband one day...!
- Men, we are **COMMANDED** to **LOVE OUR WIVES**...!
- Twice in the passage before us in **Eph 5** we are commanded to love our wives as we love ourselves, **verse 28 & 33** and the ultimate command we find in this passage is that we must love our wives as Christ loved the Church... **verse 25**
- Now, immediately some men would say, but you don't know my wife...she isn't very loveable.
- The first, logic and human response would be – *then why did you marry her...?*
- But the correct and Biblical response would be that the love that God demands from us towards our wives **DOESN'T DEPEND** on whether our wives are **LOVEABLE** or **DESERVE** it, but it is based on the love that **GOD SHOWED** us through Christ, which has gotten a hold of my heart, my whole being and which I am **COMPELLED** to reflect towards others and it starts with being **OBEDIENT**, by **DECIDING** and **COMMITTING** to loving my wife as Christ loved the church...!
- There is a puritan quote that reads: "**First a man chooses his love, and then a man must love his choice.**"
- This then is the command that we have before us, that we should love our wives as Christ loved the church!
- To understand how we are to love, we again need to understand how **JESUS** loved as it is revealed to us through this passage...!

Study Points:

- As we said in the previous study, in this passage we find that the man or **HUSBAND** has basically **TWO PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**:

1) He is to be his wife's **LEADER** (**v23**)

2) He is to be his wife's **LOVER** (**v25-29**)

- We will only look at the second responsibility in this study...

2. The Husband as **LOVER**.

- **Q: What does this love LOOK like? How does it manifest itself?**
- Remember, love is a **VERB** and it needs to **SHOW!**
- It is easy to tell your wife that you love her, but the real question is whether or not she **SEES** that you love her... Are you **PROVING** your love for her?
- Biblical love manifests itself then as:

1) **Sacrificial Love.** (**v25**)

- The love Jesus has for the church is first proven by Jesus **GIVING HIMSELF UP** for the church.
- **1 Joh 3:16**
- **Rom 5:8** – We see God showing us His love while we were totally undeserving of His love.
- The sacrificial love as manifested by Jesus is therefore also **UNCONDITIONAL** love.
- It is to love your wife not for what she can do for you, **but for what you can do for her...!**
- It is not a love that is based on **FAIRNESS** where you are willing to "**sacrifice**" as a bargaining strategy – giving something up or doing something so that she might return the favour...
- It is to **SACRIFICE** in the truest sense of the word namely without expecting anything in return, because you **LOVE** her and that is what **LOVE** does...!
- Don't get this wrong: *Jesus sacrificed Himself for us BECAUSE HE WANTED TO! It was His JOY because He LOVED us!*
- Men, it should be our **JOY** to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of our wives because we **LOVE** them!
- Implied in sacrificing ourselves then is that we are to sacrifice our:
 - **Time**... spending time with your wife; putting things on hold when she needs you; it **FRUSTRATES** me when people speak and imply as if husbands **DON'T** want to spend time with their wives...!

- **Interests**... letting go of that hobby, sport, activity that is all about you for the sake of investing in **HER** interests...
- **Money**... showing by the use of your money where your treasure is... denying to buy what you want and even need maybe to buy what she needs and wants...
- One writer says: *“Marital love is like death – it wants all of us.... it claims everything... Marriage is a call to die, and a man who does not die for his wife does not come close to the love to which he is called. Christian marriage vows are the inception of a lifelong practise of death, of giving over not only all you have, but all you are.”*
- Sacrificial love for our wives means that we will **GIVE** what is necessary, **GIVE UP** whatever it may require to fulfil in her needs and even her desires...! **WHY?** Because we **LOVE** them!
- *Husband, are you sacrificing yourself, your time, interests, money, ALL of you, for the sake of your wife?*
- *Are you busy dying to yourself for the sake of loving your wife?*
- *Are your love selfless or self-centred?*
- *Do you love with the intention of giving all you have and not wanting anything in return or do you love with the intention of receiving what you desire?*

2) Sanctifying Love. (v26-27)

- Jesus loved us and came to die on the cross to bring about the **FORGIVENESS** of our sins in order that we would be **HOLY**. (cf. **Col 1:13-14**)
- He loved us just as we were, but also for what He knew we could and would become through His love being poured out on us.
- Jesus has a **SANCTIFYING LOVE** for His church and longs for His church to become ever **INCREASINGLY HOLY**.
- Having a sanctifying love for your wife means loving her in such a way that she would become what you know **JESUS** wants her to be! Not what **YOU** want her to be.
- I believe that every Christian who has been married for some time would agree that **MARRIAGE** in of the **GREATEST INSTRUMENTS** that God uses to **SANCTIFY** us, to **CHANGE** us to become more like Jesus, because in marriage we find out how **SELF-CENTERED** we are and all our **BLIND SPOTS** and **PRETENCES** are exposed – we live before and with one another every day and as sinners we tend to **FRUSTRATE** and **IRRITATE** one another and that is fertile ground for seeing ourselves as we truly are and seeing where and to what great extent we *need God’s grace every single day!*
- *As I live with my wife day-to-day, my desire for her should be that through my union with her she would become more and more like Jesus Christ and therefore more and more prepared to be His everlasting bride one day!*
- The ultimate love you can manifest toward your wife is helping her to **PREPARE** for the day that she will be **STANDING BEFORE JESUS** as **HIS** bride which He died for in order to bring her before Himself without any wrinkle or spot, holy and blameless!
- We manifest this love towards our wives by being men of the **WORD**, men of **THE** Bible who **STUDY** and **LIVE** the Bible before our wives and by **TEACHING** our wives what we know about the Bible so that she would be washed clean of every stain that sin might still have on her life.
- **1 Pet 1:22-2:2** – this should be our reality concerning the Word of God and our desire for our wives...!
- R Kent Hughes: *“Men...do you realize it is you responsibility to seek your wife’s sanctification? Even more, honestly, do you accept it? Marriage will reveal something about her which you already know about yourself – that she is a sinner. Marriage reveals everything: her weaknesses, her inconsistencies, the things others never see. Loving your spouse is not to love her as a saint, but as a sinner. If we love her for her saintliness, we do not love her at all... You see your wife as you see yourself and you love her as yourself. You realize your mutual need and you delve into God’s Word, to listen to it with your heart and try, by His grace, to live it out so that she will be encouraged by your life – and thus become an even more beautiful bride for Christ.”*
- *Husbands, are our wives more like Christ because they are married to us?*
- *Do we sanctify them or hold them back?*
- *Are they better women, mothers and friends because they are married to us?*
- *Are they a more beautiful bride for Christ because of us...?*

3) Supplying Love. (v28-29)

- We are to love our wives as we love ourselves in the sense of **PROVIDING** and **CARING** for their daily needs as we **ARE** caring for ourselves.

- It is true that we love ourselves!
- Did you eat today? Did you dress yourself with warm clothes today? Did you shower or bathed in the past 24 hours? Why...? Because you **LOVE** yourself and take care of yourself!
- Men, we are to love our wives as we love ourselves and **TAKE CARE** of them!
- “**Nourish**” means to **PROVIDE** what is necessary for life and growth and well-being.
- This is our **RESPONSIBILITY** and **JOY** in loving our wives to take the responsibility for what they **NEED** in **ALL AREAS** of life upon ourselves and to provide for them.
- We are to provide for them as **CHRIST PROVIDES** for His **CHURCH** and in that we can also find comfort that we are part of His church, His will is that we as men should nourish our wives, so we can trust Him that He will provide for us, He will enable us to do what He has commanded us to do...! (cf. **Rom 8:31-32**)
- “**Cherish**” means to **MAKE WARM**, to **EMBRACE**, to **PROVIDE SECURITY**. Think of how some men “*cherish*” themselves, their own bodies – how they exercise and dress and protect against whatever dangers... that is what we as men are to do for our wives – we must “*cherish*” them and hold them in our arms as **FRAGILE** and **PRECIOUS TREASURE** that we want to protect at all costs, the same way that Jesus cherishes His church and said to Peter in **Matt 16:18**...
- Men, this is our call to be our wife’s **HERO!** Where we are willing to **FIGHT** whatever army may come before us for the sake of keeping her safe! This should wake up the Chuck Norris, Rambo, Rocky, James Bond, Gladiator, Braveheart mentality is us...!

Conclusion:

- This kind of love can only be manifested by a man who **KNOW THE LOVE OF GOD** as He manifested it through **JESUS CHRIST**... **1 Joh 4:19**, a man who is **FILLED** with the **SPIRIT** and are **WALKING** by the **SPIRIT**... **Eph 5:18; Gal 5:16**
- When we said, “*I do*”, we **PROMISED** that this love will be unbreakable... **Rom 8:37-39**...!

What’s a Woman to Do? Ephesians 5:22-24, 33; Genesis 2:18

Introduction:

- In the previous two studies, we have been studying the role of the **HUSBAND** in marriage as found explained to us in **Eph 5:23, 25-29** and in this study then we will look at the role of the **WIFE** in marriage as is found in **Eph 5:22-24, 33; Gen 2:18** and some parallel passages.
- Where the role of the husband are arguably the most **NEGLECTED** role in marriage, the role of the wife is arguably the most **CONTROVERSIAL** role in marriage.
- Let me state that it will not be possible to say everything there is to be said concerning the role of the wife in this study, so I will restrict myself to these two passages and then you are welcome to ask the elders any further specific questions that you still might have concerning the role of the wife.
- That being said, please read **Gen 2:18** and **Eph 5:22-24, 33**...

Study Points:

- **The Role of the Wife is to:**

1. SUBMIT by obeying God’s Command... (Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:1)

- The passage states that **WIVES** should submit to their **OWN HUSBANDS** – the context here is then definitely about **MARRIAGE** and is not a passage that should be used to say that **ALL WOMAN** must submit to **ALL MEN**...
- Every man is **NOT** the head of every woman that she should ever encounter!
- The husband is the head of **HIS** wife and therefore she is to submit under him as the **AUTHORITY** that God has placed in her life.
- The word “*submission*” has become close to a swear word in our culture and we need to understand what is the **BIBLICAL** definition of submission, what it **DOESN’T** mean and then what it **DOES** mean...

1) The Biblical definition of submission:

- It means to “**arrange or place oneself in order or under**”; “**To yield to governance and authority**”
- It is used to describe **SOLDIERS SERVING** under a commanding officer and also used to describe **PILLARS SUPPORTING** a building.

- This leaves us with the picture of **SERVICE** and **SUPPORT** for the purpose of accomplishing a **GREATER GOAL** and also with a picture of order where everything have their **PROPER PLACE**.
- When God then commands wives to submit to their husbands this should be our understanding that this is the **ORDER** that God has designed for the marriage to accomplish His goal of reflecting through the marriage relationship, the relationship between Jesus and the church and that the role of the wife is to **SERVE** and **SUPPORT** her husband and so reflect how the church is serving and supporting Christ!

2) What submission in marriage DOESN'T mean:

- Submission is **NOT** merely a concept for **WOMEN**, but for **ALL** believers; Women aren't the only ones who are to practise submission; to come under the authority that God has placed in our lives... **Eph 5:21; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5**
- Submission does **NOT** mean that the wife is **INFERIOR** to the husband – **Gen 1:27-28; Gal 3:28; Luk 2:51**
- Submission does **NOT** mean that a wife **NEVER OPENS HER MOUTH** and never has an **OPINION** or **GIVES ADVICE** – **Prov 31:26**
- Submission does **NOT** mean that a wife becomes **DORMANT** and doesn't use her **TALENTS** and **ABILITIES** – **Prov 31:13-22**
- Submission does **NOT** mean that a wife becomes **ENSLAVED** or a **SLAVE** – it is not a **PUNISHMENT** but God's **DESIGN** to bring her to ultimate fulfilment and freedom because that how He designed her...!
- Submission does **NOT** mean that the wife must put the husband in the **PLACE OF GOD** – the husband has a **DELEGATED** authority over his wife, but God has **ULTIMATE** authority – the principle of **Acts 5:29** applies so that when a wife is required to do something sinful or when she is hindered to obey a direct command of God, the husband **LOSES** his authority and she must **OBEY GOD** above her husband.

3) What submission in marriage DOES mean:

- Submission is **MANDATORY** and it is the **WIFES RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE HERSELF SUBMISSIVE** – it is not dependent on the way her husband **TREATS** her and not something that he is commanded to **FORCE** on her, but she is to make herself submissive in **OBEDIENCE** to the **COMMAND** of God! It is in the **IMPERATIVE MOOD**... Submission is **NOT** based on **SUPERIORITY**, whether you think that your husband is more wise, spiritual, educated than you or not; it is based on the **OBEDIENCE** of a command!
- Submission is to be **CONTINUOUS** – it is in the **PRESENT TENSE** and therefore something that is happening all the time – not an on and off thing based on how you feel... this should be the **LIFE-STYLE** of a wife.
- Submission is a **SPIRITUAL MATTER** – it is to be done as **UNTO THE LORD**. A wife who isn't submitting herself unto her husband is by implication **REBELLING** against **GOD** and mustn't think she would be able to have an intimate relationship with Him. Submission is a test of her **LOVE** for God, her **TRUST** in God and a test for whether or not she is **FILLED** with and **WALKING** in the **SPIRIT** for this is not something that she can do out of herself – **Eph 5:18; Gal 5:16**
- Submission is to be **EXTENSIVE** – **Eph 5:24**. In reflecting the submission that the church has towards Jesus, the wife must be submissive in **EVERYTHING**! It is to deny herself of her **PREFERENCES** when it comes to certain decisions and tasks and to submit under the authority and decisions of her husband. It is to be **UNSELFISH**... The only grounds for not submitting is when your husband wants you to sin – other than that, you submit...!
- Submission is a **POSITIVE CONCEPT** - Submission is *“the freedom to be creative under divinely appointed authority”* It is where the wife uses **ALL** her God given abilities and talents in the role that He has given her to **SERVE** and **SUPPORT** her husband as being part of his team and striving **WITH** him, not **AGAINST** him toward the same goal. She raises all of her opinions, ideas, insights and desires but then submits under her husband's final decision. This brings the freedom and fulfilment that God has designed for her!
- Allow me to just quickly point out **WHY** wives struggle to submit to their husbands.
- If this is God's good and perfect design to bring freedom and fulfilment to women, why don't they want to submit to their husbands? Four words – **Sin; Selfishness; Fear; Faithlessness**
- **SIN**: All sinful hearts naturally **RESIST AUTHORITY** and this is true for wives as well... But in a more direct way wives struggle to submit because of the **FALL** and the **CURSE** that God then proclaimed over the women – **Gen 3:16** and **4:17** teaches us that the wives desire will be after her husband as sins desire is after man – to do what? To **REIGN** over him! This is the reason for feminism...

- **SELFISHNESS:** Submitting under your husband will sometimes require that you must do things that you **DON'T** want to do, things that you don't **LIKE**, things you don't **FEEL** like doing and then you want to rebel and not submit...!
- **FEAR:** Many wives are **SCARED** of what might happen if they submit completely under their husbands especially when they see or feel that their husbands aren't acting as responsible or loving or leading as they should. How will it affect them **FINANCIALLY**, **EMOTIONALLY**, **SOCIALLY** if they submit completely under him? They are scared of what the **MATERIAL CONSEQUENCES** might be and therefore try and be the **LEADER** rather than the **FOLLOWER**...
- **FAITHLESSNESS:** This is ultimately the biggest yet subtle reason why wives struggle to submit to their husbands – **THEY DON'T BELIEVE AND TRUST GOD!** **HE** made the design and gave the command and disobedience towards Him in this regard communicates that I don't think His design is **GOOD** and **PERFECT** and that I don't **TRUST** that He is **ABLE** to and **WILL WORK** all things for good as I simply **OBEY** Him...! I don't trust His **SOVEREIGNTY** and **PROVIDENCE**... Wives then take matters into their own hands and by implication they are trying to play **GOD** in their own lives and marriages, they are trying to be **LIKE GOD**, they are again **FALLING** for the same temptation that Eve fell for in the Garden of Eden – *“if you eat of this fruit, you will be like God...!”*

2. RESPECT her husband, displaying the appropriate Attitude in Submission... (Eph 5:33)

- It is not enough to just submit under your husband, but your **ATTITUDE** should be right as well...
- The submission that **JESUS** desires from the **CHURCH** is definitely **NOT** obedience with a **BAD ATTITUDE**
- It is possible to submit and yet be **DISGRUNTLED**, **NEGATIVE**, **COMPLAINING**, **RESENTFUL**, **ACCUSING**...
- **Eph 5:33** speaks against these kinds of attitude!
- The wife is to **RESPECT** her husband.
- Again notice that this is part of the **COMMAND** to submit so again it is not **OPTIONAL**, but **MANDATORY**.
- In marriage the wife is to **RESPECT** her husband, whether he **DESERVES** her respect or **NOT**...!
- The Amplified Bible has a very good elaboration on what it means to **RESPECT** your husband: *“let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honours him, prefers him, venerates and esteems him, and that she defers to him, praises him and loves and admires him exceedingly.]”*
- In **1 Pet 3:2** Peter writes the same thing and here the context is that this is to be the wife's **ATTITUDE** even if some of their husbands are **NOT OBEDIENT** to the word, meaning not saved...!
- This is then to be the **WIFE'S ATTITUDE** in her submission **REGARDLESS** of her husband's **SPIRITUAL STATE** and **CONSEQUENT ACTIONS**...
- This is the **ATTITUDE** that God commands and will then develop in a wife who is filled with and walking in the Spirit...!

3. Help and so fulfil her Position... (Gen 2:18)

- It is clear that God's design from the beginning was that the woman would **COMPLETE** and **COMPLIMENT** the man. • God made Eve from Adam and brought her to Adam as one who is **LIKE** him, that would **FIT** to him and that would be his **HELPER**.
- In the order and design that God has given in marriage, this then is to be the wife's **POSITION**, her **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY** and **MINISTRY** – her husband!
- She is to use her abilities, talents, resources and whatever God has gifted her with for the **SUPPORT** and **SERVICE** of her husband, to **HELP** him in whatever God has called him to do...!
- Wayne Mack: *“According to Scripture the wife was made to fulfil the needs, the lacks, the inadequacies of her husband. She was made to be her husband's unique helper. She is to do him good and not evil all the days of her life (Prov 31:12). She is to be like a fruitful vine in her husband's house (Ps 128:3). She is to be ‘one flesh’ with her husband and this will happen only as she accepts and fulfils her God appointed role in marriage.”*
- This does not mean that a wife cannot do anything that doesn't have a direct connection to her husband, as we find that the **Prov 31** wife is involved in all kinds of endeavours for the benefit of others and herself and so living out ministry through activities outside the home, **BUT** it does mean that she should **NEVER** do

something that would be **DETRIMENTAL** or **HARMFUL** to her husband or that would cause her to **NEGLECT** her **PRIMARY MINISTRY** of helping her husband...!

• To be your husband's helper means to be his:

1) FRIEND:

- A friend is **TRUSTWORTHY** – **Prov 31:11-12**
- A friend **SACRIFICES** – **Joh 15:13**
- A friend **SERVES** – **Joh 13:15**
- A friend is **SENSITIVE** – **Prov 27:14** (Being sensitive to his needs...)
- A friend **SUPPORTS** – **Eccles 4:9-12**
- A friend makes **TIME**... Setting aside time and rescheduling her own things if necessary...

2) COLABORER: (Working alongside your husband...)

- **In the home:** Making it comfortable, inviting and satisfying for him. Giving attention to his preferences concerning the state of the home. Working with him in the raising and teaching of the children – **Eph 6:4; Prov 1:18**. Helping and being involved with planning for the present and future of the family. Collaborating with him concerning the family finances and staying within the budget. A godly wife will labour with her husband for the family's spiritual needs.
- **In his workplace:** Showing genuine interest in his work – his challenges and his excitements. Finding ways to be practically involved with his work without following him there and doing it for him...

3) COMMENDER:

- **Matt 13:57** should **NEVER** be true of a husband! A wife should be her husband's **CHEERLEADER!**
- **Commending him to others** – family and friends; not complaining but focusing on his strengths; constructive criticism should be done in private...
- **Commending him to his children** – children should think the best of their father and the wife should help to foster their view of him. How she responds to him and what she says about him will be what they imitate and think...
- **Showing appreciation** – for who he is and what he does through special days, meals; thanking him for the small and big things he does, even when he doesn't do it according to your preferences...
- **Making the home a refuge** – she should make the home a place that he longs to be and where he knows that she wants him to be. His home should be a place where he is eager to get to everyday after work. Because he knows his greatest fan is waiting for him!

4) CHALLENGER:

- **Heb 10:24** – considering how to stir him up to greater godliness.
- **Matt 18:15; Gal 6:1** – lovingly confront the sin we see exposed in his life.

5) COUNSELOR:

- **Prov 31:26** – seek to give wise counsel when he seeks it regarding decisions or circumstances.

6) CROWN:

- **Prov 12:4** – seek to be a wife that her husband is proud of!

Conclusion:

- This is **GOD'S HIGH CALLING** on the **WIFE!**
- May God give every wife and future wife to be the **GRACE** that is needed to fulfil their **ROLE** as wives!

(Many of the thoughts and content that have been shared in this study is dealt with by Wayne Mack in his book *Strengthening Your Marriage*)