

Our society presents a confusing image of the role for the husband in the home. Feminists portray the husband as a selfish tyrant who oppresses his wife. Television programs and movies present the husband as a fool who would be hopelessly lost without the guidance of his wife. Modern psychologists teach that a husband needs to be more feminine and that traditional roles in the home need to be abolished in favor of gender-free sameness. What is a husband to do?

God's word clearly communicates God's design and expectations for the husband in the home. Ephesians 5:22-33 is the classic text in the New Testament that reveals God's plan for both husbands and wives.

The first lesson a husband must understand is found in verse 23, which says,

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

The figure of the head indicates that the husband is to have authority over the wife. This is the same figure that is used to explain the relationship of Christ to the church in Ephesians 1:22-23. This divine order traces all the way back to Adam and Eve, for Adam was created first, and Eve was deceived and fell into transgression (1Timothy 2:12-14).

By virtue of being appointed head of his wife, a husband has certain burdens laid upon him that he must bear well. He must take responsibility for his wife and his marriage. He must exercise leadership and make decisions for his home in accordance with God's will.

The authority of a husband is tempered by the mandate of love in Ephesians 5:25-30:

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰because we are members of His body.

The immeasurable love of Christ for the church is the very high standard for husbands to attain regarding their wives. A husband's love for his wife must imitate Christ's love for the church, which is selfless and self-sacrificing. Christ gave Himself up for the church, and a husband must be willing to do the same for his wife.

Governed by love, a husband will nourish and cherish his wife like his own body. He will have concern for her needs. The Scripture instructs,

1 Peter 3:7 – You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Building a God-Centered Home: God's Plan for Husbands

"Weaker vessel" is not a derogatory term, but rather it is comparative. A husband is a vessel with a certain purpose, and a wife is a different vessel with a different purpose. A husband must understand this. In fact, he should honor his wife as a precious vessel, a fellow heir of grace, and his equal in the kingdom of God.

So then, let every husband recognize the truth of God's word:

Proverbs 31:10 – An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.

Proverbs 18:22 – He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.

"Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).