

## Husbandly Attributes and Attitudes

With a subject as broad as this could be, it's difficult knowing how or where to start. Rather than stumble around awkwardly, let's look at it from another angle. Many Christian men, particularly the dysfunctional ones, are almost preoccupied with having a 'Proverbs 31 wife' and beating their woman over the head with a 'submission stick' from Ephesians 5. So let's start there.

In order to receive anything from God by way of a promise or favor, you first must be ready to receive it. While I'm at it let me also clarify my position. You are not 'entitled' to anything other than air to breathe. Beyond that you need to seek it from God or earn it, and sometimes both. This is especially true for respect and love in interpersonal relationships. Time to dig in and get basic.

Just as Christ is the cornerstone and foundation for the Kingdom of God, you are the cornerstone and foundation for your household. So what kind of stone are you, anyway? To answer this truthfully and accurately you have to take a long, hard, objective look at yourself in total. This means searching back to your childhood in many cases. Traits, both the good ones and the not so good ones, don't just happen! They are first demonstrated (or maybe inflicted might be a better term) over and over and over, until they become a kind of 'normal' for you and part of your basic nature.

Are you given to much anger and a short temper, or have the need to hit things (or people) when things don't go as expected, do you stomp around, throw things or scream at people when frustrated, or to the other extreme, do you shut everything out when life brings pain or discomfort? If things like this happen more than once or twice, chances are that these behaviors are patterns you learned over time, beginning when you were very young. They do not serve you well anymore, even for a short time. Since this process takes years to become established, don't expect that they will just poof and go away just cause you want them to. You will need some professional guidance as well as sustained hard, diligent work to rid yourself of them and replace them with responsible wholesome behaviors.

Don't go getting all persecuted and depressed. The vast majority of people have unhealthy behaviors and patterns, some more violent than others, that don't serve their best interests any more and need changing. So you are not nearly as alone as you might feel or think. Sit back and really think about it for a moment - if you want a Proverbs 31 wife, then you, as head of the household, will need to create the environment where that sort of woman can flourish and grow. Even the best of seeds will not grow if left on the sidewalk. It takes good fertile soil, and gentle tending to grow good things! But the labor is well worth it when it comes harvest time.

OK, you've done the critical inventory of yourself and are endeavoring to change what isn't working anymore. Now what? I'm hoping that the real step #1 was you praying to the Lord about this whole thing and asking His help and guidance throughout this project. As a matter of fact, if you haven't done that yet, why not go do it now. It's never too early to get the big guy involved!

Next up - Psalm 119:15 I will meditate on thy precepts, And have respect unto thy ways. (ASV) If you want to do things God's way, it's going to take some investigating first, and then some understanding. Perhaps that means a new understanding if you're harboring ideas stemming from incorrect doctrine. I put together a Study Guide that lists resources and methods to unlock the bible and all it's treasures for yourself on a very personal level.

Let's begin the exploration with the submission stick chapter - We'll start a little before the stick, in verse 22, to get the rhythm flowing. The following is from the American Standard Version -

### **Ephesians 5:**

**15** Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;

**16** redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

**17** Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.  
**18** And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit;  
**19** speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;  
**20** giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;  
**21** subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.  
**22** Wives, *be in subjection* unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.  
**23** For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the church, *being* himself the saviour of the body.  
**24** But as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives also *be* to their husbands in everything.  
**25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it;  
**26** that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,  
**27** that he might present the church to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.  
**28** Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself:  
**29** for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church;  
**30** because we are members of his body.  
**31** For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.  
**32** This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church.  
**33** Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and *let* the wife see that she fear her husband.

These passages have been incorrectly interpreted for a great long time and used to damage thousands of women each day. I urge you to carefully examine and dissect them and go back to the Greek and fully appreciate what is being said here. This is so critical to every husbands proper understanding that I'll show it in another translation.

Here is the same text from The Message -

So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

**17** Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.  
**18-20** Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God, huge draughts of him. Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.

## Relationships

**21** Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.

**22-24** Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands.

**25-28** Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They're really doing themselves a favor—since they're already "one" in marriage.

**29-33** No one abuses his own body, does he? No, he feeds and pampers it. That's how Christ treats us, the church, since we are part of his body. And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become "one flesh." This is a huge mystery, and I don't

pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the church. And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her, and how each wife is to honor her husband.

Even on the surface there is no indication or justification for any form of abuse. Not verbal and most certainly not physical abuse. What you need or want out of the marriage you must first demonstrate that quality or provide the right conditions for it to happen. When the Thanksgiving dinner is ready, you don't go to the garage and sit on the lawn tractor and wonder why you're getting hungry, do you? No, of course not, but don't let the absurdity go just yet. Think for a moment, honestly and objectively if you would please, about how you treat your wife.

If you continually denigrate her, especially in public, you don't deserve much at all. The same applies for slapping her around or otherwise 'tuning her up' as the saying goes, or keeping her all but captive and secluded. Because that's what you're demonstrating - a serious lack of respect and caring, and total lack of understanding. Look at the second part of Matthew 22:39 where the Lord himself speaks of the second greatest commandment - "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (ASV) My first point here is you are to do the loving first - it makes no mention of a response at all. Secondly, the Greek word translated as "neighbor" means "close by" according to Strong's Greek Dictionary. I believe that 'wife' falls squarely within that definition, don't you?

Isn't it fair then to say that it is absurd for you to expect your wife to be submissive or compliant in any way when you put those kinds of behaviors into practice? There's no way around it - you reap what you sow. You'll never get Sweet Corn from Thistle seeds. Even the much touted Proverbs 31 tells the husband to trust his wife in verse 11, just ahead of all the coveted 'goodies' men want, and then to praise her and her accomplishments in verses 28 & 29. Then to top it off to 'let her works praise her in the gates' implies public service in the last verse. Way more than what is taught in some places!!

How about we get back to the way it's meant to be and try to understand what God has in mind for a husband to be. What follows is a section taken from Torrey's Topical Textbook under the general topic of 'husbands' -

Should have but one wife - Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:6-8; 1Corinthians 7:2-4

Have authority over their wives - Genesis 3:16; 1Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23

DUTY OF, TO WIVES;

To respect them - 1Peter 3:7

To love them - Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:19

To regard them as themselves - Genesis 2:23; Matthew 19:5

To be faithful to them - Proverbs 5:19; Malachi 2:14-15

To dwell with them for life - Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9

To comfort them - 1Samuel 1:8

To consult with them - Genesis 31:4-7

Not to leave them, though unbelieving - 1Corinthians 7:11-12,14,16

Duties of, not to interfere with their duties to Christ - Luke 14:26; Matthew 19:29

I would strongly recommend you spend some time investigating all of these verses and thoroughly digesting what they teach. Believe me you will reap huge rewards when you plant healthy seeds!!