

RESPECT YOUR HUSBAND

By David Bunting

In marriage God joins a man and a woman to be husband and wife. The two become one. In this union both persons are required to fulfill their specific roles as set forth by the heavenly Father. Wives are called upon to respect their own husbands. “Let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Ephesians 5:33).

A proper demonstration of respect toward the husband begins with the understanding and conviction of his leadership role. God ordained the husband to be the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23). This arrangement is from God, and thus, it is right, good and what works the best. Now that does not mean that every husband will properly lead as the head of his wife, but a different arrangement is to the detriment of the marriage. Failure to show respect to your husband is a rejection of God and His will.

Godly respect adorns the wife’s life with submissiveness toward her own husband (1 Peter 3:5). She yields to his direction and guidance. Genuine willingness to place herself under her husband’s headship grows out of an allegiance to the Lord. “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22). The Christ-like attitude necessary to meet this challenge is expressed in the description of a good servant: “in sincerity of heart,” “doing the will of God from the heart,” “with goodwill doing service” (6:5-7). Husbandward submission as to the Lord is not one that picks and chooses according an individual’s likes and dislikes, nor according emotional whims, but rather, submits “in everything” (Ephesians 5:24). The wife’s “gentle and quiet spirit” which is precious to God (1 Peter 3:4) manifests her greatest strength in willingly following the husband’s lead when she would have done differently.

The Holy Spirit chose Abraham’s wife Sarah to illustrate that submission is displayed in how a wife communicates to and with her husband. Because Sarah trusted in God, she “obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” (1 Peter 3:6). Now there is “one Lord” who is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:5), but the term *lord* was a cultural address that communicated respect for one in a position of authority and honor. Wives ought to speak to and about their husbands in such a manner that they honor the man who is called upon to be the “head of the wife.”

This respect is to be accompanied with affection. Women are admonished to “love their husbands” (Titus 2:4). All Christians are commanded to love [*agapao*] their fellowman. This kind of love is known by the actions it prompts, doing what is best for the person loved. But the love [*phileo*] wives are commanded to cultivate for their husbands is “tender affection.” A husband needs his wife’s continual affection - the precious tenderness a godly woman nourishes because she alone is his suitable helper who meets and supplies his needs (Genesis 2:18, 24).