

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Ephesians 5:31-33 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Quote: The keys to harmony in the home involve fulfilling God-given roles for His glory.

In a covenant of companionship, the husband and wife must fulfill their personal responsibility regardless of what their spouse does. They are distinct but equal and their roles are vitally important for the health and testimony of their marriage. As the head of his home, it is the husband’s God-given duty and privilege to love his wife sacrificially as Christ loves the church,¹ to provide tender leadership for her,² to protect her from danger, to meet her needs and to foster a God-honoring home to the best of his ability. It is the duty of *both husband and wife* to find their greatest earthly joy in the company of each other, and to **defend and develop their oneness** as husband and wife. A key to an intimate, healthy relationship is for both to focus on **giving and not on getting**.

The Greek word for the love required of husbands is agape. Agape is unmerited; it cannot be earned. Agape is unconditional; it has no prerequisites. Agape is unreserved; it has no areas that it does not address. Agape is unrelenting; it never ceases to fulfill its duty. Agape is unselfish; it often involves sacrifice for the one loved. Agape is unpretentious; it does not flaunt itself.

The Bible states that the husband is to dwell with his wife according to knowledge.¹ He is to be a "learner" in ways that grow his relationship with his wife. One way to do that is to try to see what her typical day is like from her point-of-view. That takes purpose, patience, partnership and perseverance! The model for the husband’s responsibility to love his wife knowledgeably is Christ’s love for the church. He knows our every fault, yet He died that we might live! It is prideful and self-serving for any man to seek to mold his wife into his own vision of the “perfect woman.” Failing to give

her the honor due to her will negatively affect his spiritual life. His prayers will be hindered, and seeds of bitterness may take root over perceived shortcomings on her part.² He can give his wife a sense of security by showing gratitude for her, serving her needs and guarding his interactions with other women thereby declaring to her and to others that he is a one-woman man who is devoted to his wife. A husband can also guard against abusing his leadership role as the “head” of his family by not insisting that he must independently decide everything. His wife’s input can be invaluable!

A husband and wife must be alert to any threats to their marriage. A husband in particular must flee the scourge of pornography as a danger to his marriage. It can lead to fanaticizing, “using” his wife and possible divorce because she does not “measure up” to the seductresses in his mind.

Unique Roles in the Family, the Husband

The unselfish love for a healthy marriage is captured in the following illustration: “During Oliver Cromwell’s reign as lord protector of England a young soldier was sentenced to die. The girl to whom he was engaged pleaded with Cromwell to spare the life of her beloved, but to no avail. The young man was to be executed when the curfew bell sounded, but when the sexton repeatedly pulled the rope the bell made no sound. The girl had climbed into the belfry and wrapped herself around the clapper so that it could not strike the bell. Her body was smashed and bruised, but she did not let go until the clapper stopped swinging. She managed to climb down, bruised and bleeding, to meet those awaiting the execution. When she explained what she had done, Cromwell commuted the sentence. A poet beautifully recorded the story as follows: ‘At his feet she told her story, showed her hands all bruised and torn, and her sweet, young face still haggard with the anguish it had worn, touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty light. ‘Go, your lover lives,’ said Cromwell; ‘Curfew will not ring tonight.’”³ “Curfew” has rung on many marriages because husbands and wives have not made biblical love the top priority in their home!

¹ Eph 5:25-33 ² 1 Peter 3:7; Col 3:19 ³ J. MacArthur