

THE MAN AND HIS MARRIAGE

UNDERSTANDING YOUR WIFE!

LIVING JOYFULLY WITH YOUR WIFE!

MINISTERING TO YOUR WIFE!

Maximizing Your Manhood
Toward Your Wife

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lesson one --	The Husband, The Leader	pgs 3-7
Lesson two --	Make Your Wife Happy-- Love her	pgs 8-11
Lesson three --	Why Marital Shipwreck?	pgs 12-14
Lesson four --	Meet You Wife's Basic Needs	pgs 15-18

Introduction:

TELL HER SO!

Amid the cares of married life,
In spite of toil and business strife,
If you value your sweet wife,
Tell her so!

There was a time you thought it bliss
To get the favor of a kiss;
A dozen now won't come amiss--
Tell her so!

Don't act as if she's passed her prime,
As though to please her were a crime--
If e'er you loved her, now's the time;
Tell her so!

You are hers and hers alone:
Well you know she's all your own;
Don't wait to carve it on the stone--
Tell her so!

Never let her heart grow cold;
Richer beauties will unfold,
She is worth her weight in gold;
Tell her so!

--AUTHOR UNKNOWN

There Are Four Kinds of Marriages!

Love-and-submit marriage!

Maybe only a handful of men have a marriage that really works. After you get past the facade of wanting to appear like life is wonderful, most men will confess that their marriage is not working like it's suppose to. Love and submission are God's main ingredients.

Hate-and-resist marriage!

The worst possible marriage is the one in which both partners are unhappy and both aim for their own selfish way. In the hate and submit marriage the wife contends with her husband's authority, nags him, and is apt to idle her day away. He treats his wife with harshness, animosity and disrespect in private, although in public he pretends to like her.

Hate-and-submit marriage!

Edith and Archie Bunker provide a caricature of the hate and submit marriage. He was the dominating, opinionated emperor of his house, and she the submissive attendant to all his belligerent demands. Sadly, this is the most common kind of marriage that is not working. The wife feels used, unwanted, unaccepted, while at the same time she endeavors to fulfill the role of being a submissive wife.

Love-and-resist marriage!

The feminist movement has fueled the love and resist kind of marriage. The husband is possibly as much at fault in the wife's lack of submission as she is. A career path often exemplifies the resistant wife. The two-income family puts extra tension on a marriage. It is easy for a wife to embrace the unsaved peers' attitudes against men and their leadership. This may be strongly voiced on a daily basis.

Also the employed wife may especially feel the pressure of:

1. jealousy from her co-workers.
2. unwillingness of others to take part in the burdens at home.
3. a demanding spirit at home -- the same as she gets at work.

The husband must continue to nourish and cherish his wife. The life of a man whose wife resists may be hard, but God will be glorified by his faithfulness to the Word of God. Love is a decision of the will and not a feeling.

THE HUSBAND, THE LEADER!

Lesson One

Aim: To help us understand leadership and practice the kind of leadership that God wants in our lives.

Scripture Memory: I Corinthians 11:3

Introduction:

What is leadership in the home? What is God's plan for leadership? There are so many different ideas about the subject.

A. There is the "man-is-and-ever-shall-be-the-sole-leader" idea. This view assumes that the man is superior in virtually every way. He must have the natural possession of unique gifts and abilities which fit him to lead. He is, due to his strength, size, intelligence, and tendency toward dominance, naturally the boss." I think that some men actually think this is what the Scripture is teaching in Ephesians 5:21-33.

Dominant authority serves well as a censor, an enforcer of views, a dispenser of discipline, but is that leadership? The dominant man may effectively give orders and demand control, but is that true Biblical leadership? Dominance can be desired and demanded by either sex and is not uniquely characteristic of either one. The demand for dominance can actually be a sign of--

- * weakness and insecurity,
- * a rigid, authoritative personality that is inflexible,
- * a person who fears change or challenge so greatly that he or she cannot risk being flexible and is terrified of becoming vulnerable before another person.

B. There is the "husband-is-the-head-and-the-head-is-the-leader" position. The husband is indeed commanded by God to be "head," but to be head and to be a leader are two different things. (See Ephesians 5:23; I Corinthians 11:3.) Headmanship is not synonymous with leadership. A person can be a leader and not have the position of headship. Headmanship is more than a title, a status, rank, or recognition. One who is head must accept the responsibility for failures and successes in the relationship, but does not assume sole authority in decisions and directions. Headship on the man's part does not mean that he is lord and master, or has the ultimate word in every case. The Biblical recognition of man as "head" in marriage does not endow him with all authority and right-to-dominate. The word "husband" is an Old English word that means "to band together the home." Certainly God does expect the husband to be the one who seeks to accomplish his divinely appointed mission.

C. What is Biblical headship or leadership? What is it that God desires? In the Biblical position that God has given the husband as head, he needs to be a godly leader. At the same time he must allow others of the family to lead when their contribution to the family as a whole is of benefit and it is obviously God's will for them to do so. A proper marriage brings two people into a team relationship. Both persons willingly give up certain rights in order to gain certain privileges that belong to them in marriage. Neither can be a totally independent person.

I. A LOOK AT THE MAN'S BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

A. Headship means responsibility and initiative; the responsibility to act in love, the initiative to act in service. It means to serve as Christ came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. (See Matthew 20:28.)

Christ acted in self-giving love and self-humbling service, giving us a whole new meaning to headship. So husbands are to take the initiative in building an atmosphere of loving, self-sacrificing service. It would be well at this point to study Luke 22:25-27 and Matthew 20:20-28, where Christ teaches the importance of such self-effacing service. Headship is vested in the man for the sake of ministering and giving oversight, not for the sake of selfish, self-serving dominance.

B. Leadership means accepting responsibility and performing certain functions in a marriage relationship in a way that meets the needs of everyone in the home. The purpose is to advance everyone toward God-honoring goals.

Leadership is not a certain role for only one person, a certain sex at all times in control, or a permanent possession of one of the persons. Leadership may alternate; it is a contribution made by either or both spouses for the sake of both. (Discuss the following.)

1. Leadership is helping and serving so that both move forward.
2. It is an action done by either person in a way that liberates both. It may go unnoticed.
3. It happens best when unrecognized, or when it is selfless, unselfconscious, self-giving, and when it is exercised in a Christ-like way of giving help.

Helping another is best defined as giving another the freedom to change, and change voluntarily. This is a creative exercise in leadership. In contrast, authoritarian dominance prohibits free choice and inhibits free interchange and the freedom to change.

II. A LOOK AT CONTRASTS

A study and consideration of the following will help us to see the difference between a dictatorial attitude and God-honoring leadership.

The autocratic personality--

gives orders without asking questions, without permitting questions; makes demands,

The Christ-ocratic personality--

ask questions, seeks to truly hear, suggests alternatives; respects freedom and

dishes out directives,
lays down the **law**,
is defensive if
challenged;
requires total compliance
regardless of consent
or agreement;
pushes and manipulates;
one-man rule in over-
under position;
says, "You do, you must
do, you ought to have done,
you'd better do";
depends on his own
external authority to
motivate others;
generates much friction,
resistance,
resentment;
separates and
isolates people.

dignity of others,
affirms the truth clearly
and concretely but
nondefensively;
values willing cooperation,
works for open agreement
and understanding;
leads, attracts, persuades;
personal relationships in
side-by-side identification;
says, "Come, let's do,
we might have done, can
we try";
depends on their
internal integrity
to motivate them;
generates acceptance,
cooperation, and
reconciliation;
unites and helps persons
relate to each other.

Dr. David W. Augsburger, from Man, the Leader!

Leadership shared in mutual respect can establish a climate of dignity, freedom, and responsibility, creating an atmosphere which is both comforting and stimulating to both -- a Christian atmosphere. In this kind of marriage each is eager to see the other grow toward personal maturity and Christ-likeness.

A Biblical marriage is based on a plan for the flow of leadership and decision making. The "president-vice president" marriage -- some call it the democratic model -- is a balanced approach, more in line with such passages as Ephesians 5:21-22 and I Peter 3:1-7.

Howard Hendricks says that the husband is also the heart of the home. He leads, but always with a loving concern for the welfare of his wife and family. He respects his wife as the executive vice-president. She is his helpmate, which means that the president does need help!

III. A LOOK AT APPLICATIONS FROM CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

In the same way that Christ voluntarily put Himself under God the Father, so men are to put themselves under Christ. Consider the teaching of I Corinthians 11:3. What we want to examine or consider is the way that Christ ministered to the Father and fulfilled this purpose in His role of subservience to the Father. Why did Christ come? We know there are many answers. What was His relationship to the Father? I would urge every husband to apply the following four truths to his own life and to the realm of leadership in his own home. In these four purposes Christ is an example for each husband. We need to fulfill toward Christ these same four things Christ fulfilled toward the Father.

A. Christ came to do the Father's will. (See John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29.) Similarly, the purpose of the husband's leadership, or headship, should be to do the Father's will. This means to **know** and to **fulfill** God's will. As a husband leads he ought to be constantly considering what the will of God is for him and for the family. (See Ephesians 5:17; 6:6; Colossians 4:12.)

Thus the fulfillment of his headship is not dominance to bring about his own selfish will, but to bring about the will of God.

- B. Christ came to speak the Father's words.** (See John 7:17; 8:26, 28; 17:8.) Christ did not come to speak His own words or His own doctrine, but that which the Father gave Him. By the same token the husband's purpose in leadership ought to be to set forth the teaching of the Word of God -- not his own ideas, but the clear Word of God. This will necessitate his leading a family altar time where the Word of God is applied to daily living. This should be considered as an extremely important part of godly leadership. To speak the Word of God to the family as it applies to life is to pattern Christ's example of only speaking those things given of the Father.

The husband should endeavor to speak Biblical truth and not those things that would please or exalt himself.

- C. Christ came to glorify the Father.** (See John 17:1, 4.) Christ's purpose here on earth was to bring glory to God. This should be the bottom-line purpose of any godly father and husband. As the husband seeks to glorify God, he will naturally think about every aspect of the home life. His intent will be to glorify God through conversation, music, fun times, services at church, and all that makes up home life. In a specific way the husband *must seek* the glory of God in every facet of the home life.

- D. Christ came to reveal the Father.** (See John 14:8-11; 17:6, 29.) Philip wanted Christ to make the Father known to them. Christ said that he had been long with them and they should have known the Father from this relationship. Christ came to set forth the Father, that is, to help man know what the Father is like. Christ **was and is** the Father in human form, and He came to manifest the Father so that we could know Him and understand Him. (See John 10:30.)

A husband's purpose, among other things, should be to make Christ real to the family. It ought to be his intent to help the family fall in love with the Savior. As husband and father, he must labor to help the family understand all that Christ is in person, power, and purpose. He needs to teach Biblical doctrine about the Godhead.

TO BE A MAN

*is to possess the strength to love another,
not the need to dominate others.*

TO BE A MAN

*is to experience the courage to accept another,
not the compulsion to be an aggressor.*

TO BE A MAN

*is to keep faith with godly values in relationships,
not to value oneself by position or possessions.*

TO BE A MAN

*is to be free to give love
and to be free to accept love in return.*

Life together is life shared. Shared love, shared work, shared opportunities, shared leadership, and even shared initiative should be the norm. Man, the God-planned head, will function officially for both in public matters. Under her husband, the wife leads with him, and not against him, as he delegates areas to her.

Questions: for launching, guiding, or applications.

1. What phrases describe the general sensitivity that should exist between believers, including husband and wife, as they relate to each other on a day-to-day basis? (Philippians 2:1-4.)
 2. In I Timothy 3:1-12, identify some key characteristics that describe a leader such as a husband and father in the home.
 3. The Word of God sets forth two responsibilities of the husband in his relationship to his wife. What are they?
 4. What does it mean for a husband to nourish and cherish his wife as commanded in Ephesians 5:28, 29?
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QUOTES:

Leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal which they come to find desirable. -- Ordway Teal

Leadership is a matter of having people look at you and gain confidence, seeing how you react. If you are in control, they are in control. - Tom Landry

A leader has been defined as one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. -- Franklin P. Jones

Skill in the art of communication is crucial to a leader's success. He can accomplish nothing unless he can communicate effectively. -- Norman Allen

The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on. -- Walter Lippman, in *Roosevelt Has Gone* (April 14, 1945)

No man ruleth safely but he that is willingly ruled. -- Thomas A. Kempis

MAKE YOUR WIFE HAPPY-- LOVE HER!

Lesson Two

AIM: To understand the necessity of "working at" making your wife happy, fulfilled, and secure.

Introduction:

There are many reasons for the breakup of marriages, but the most common one is never mentioned in divorce complaints, that is, *each of the marriage partners is waiting for the other to meet his or her needs.*

Selfishness cries out, "Meet my needs! Love me! Love me even when I am unlovable, hysterical, or uncommunicative, or impossible!" Love says, "Let me try to meet your needs. Tell me what it is that you want or need, and I will do my best to comply. If I cannot do so at the moment, I will explain why, as patiently as I can; but I will try to meet your needs to the best of my ability. I will try to love you with an unconditional love."

God commands the husband to dwell with his wife according to knowledge, giving honor to her as the weaker vessel as being heirs of the grace of life. (See I Peter. 3:7.) There are some very basic truths or principles set forth in this verse. **To dwell with the wife according to knowledge is to know what her basic needs are as well as her unique needs as a unique person.**

There are two basic needs which every individual possesses. They are -- *to love and to be loved; and to feel worthwhile.* Anything we can do to meet these basic God-given needs is an act of godly love. Failure to meet the needs results in heartache, disillusionment, despair, and often divorce.

Scripture Memory: Ephesians 5:28,29

You can make your wife happy -- you can love her. (Ephesians 5:25-29) How we relate to others provides a means of both measuring our emotional maturity and motivating our further growth in Christ.

Since the way we treat other people-- whether family, close friends, or mere acquaintances -- reflects the way we regard the Lord (See Matthew 25:31-46.), we can be assured that He uses us to bless others, just as he uses others to bless us. The way we handle our relationships can also signal whether or not our faith is holding up (See James 1:26, 27.) And our ability or inability to love others--which is what relationships are all about -- confirms or denies our professed love for Christ. (See I John 3:23,24.) If, as men, we are truly walking in God's love (See Ephesians 5:1.) that love will rule in our lives. God is love, and his Word says that love is *from Him*. The great challenge is to love God with our hearts, souls, strength, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is a natural thing to love ourselves! But do we truly love God and love our wives? God's love is to permeate all our relationships. Love should fill the very atmosphere of our homes and marriages.

I. LOVE HER WITH "EROS" LOVE:

- A. This is an emotional love,** while based at least in part on physical attraction, it is enhanced by touching, and hugging in nonsexual ways. Of course, in marriage, *Eros* includes romantic sex.

This kind of emotional love is very important to the marital commitment and is described by such words as "satisfy" and "exhilarated" in the Book of Proverbs. (See Proverbs 5: 19.) The husband is to be thrilled with the beauty of his wife and be ravished always with her love and person.

- B. If *Eros* is neglected in a marriage,** Satan will come knocking at the door with his temptations. Each partner in the marriage should nurture this kind of love by kissing, hugging, compliments, eye contact, provocative teasing, romance, and so on.
- C. When married people say they have "fallen out of love,"** *Eros* is usually what they are talking about. The damaging emotions like unresolved anger, anxiety, or guilt must be removed. We must determine to have nothing between us if we are to have joyous *Eros* love. This kind of love needs constant nourishment and investment of unhurried times of affection.

II. LOVE HER WITH "*PHILEO*" LOVE:

- A. This kind of love is a relational love,** which means being best friends, doing things together, giving high priority to time together in the marriage. It might include developing shared hobbies, going on "dates", taking weekend excursions occasionally. It basically involves sharing each other's lives-- playing games, remodeling a room, fishing, camping, relaxing, laughing, planning, praying, read the Word, and going to church to worship together.
- B. When this kind of love reigns** we will delight in our wife's presence. It is nurtured by good communication and developing many common interests. Titus 2: 4 speaks of this kind of love on the part of a woman for her husband. In marriage it means being best friends, doing things together, and giving high priority to companionship time together.

III. LOVE HER WITH "*AGAPE*" LOVE.

- A. This is God's kind of love.** It is the most important kind of love and operates by obedience and faith. It is this kind of love that caused Christ to pay for our sins. It is spoken of so many times in the Word of God and we are commanded to manifest this kind of love.
- B. Since this love is mental, spiritual, and volitional it necessitates that we allow the Holy Spirit to impart this,** God's love, in us and through us. (See Romans 5:5, 8; II Corinthians 5:14,15; Galatians 5:22,23.) This is a commitment phase of love. It is not merely a feeling but a **choice** to act in a caring way for another. *Agape* love is defined as taking the kind of initiative to meet real needs in another's life that will result in spiritual growth. *Agape* injects strength and purity into both *Eros* and *phileo*. It is the word used in Ephesians 5:25, 29-33 where the man is called upon to love his wife.
- C. *Agape* love is manifested** in the characteristics so clearly spoke of in I Corinthians 13:1-8. This kind of love is unselfish, actively giving and comes from a life that is dedicated and devoted to God, Himself. His love cannot be manifested without Divine power.
If you love her as God commands us to love, then you will give her unconditional love. This is love which makes no demands, and is given regardless of the performance of the recipient.

It is love given to the unlovely, undeserving, and unresponsive. When Christ comes into the marriage as He did the wedding at Cana, He can continue to supply the "wine of love" so that it never will be used up or exhausted.

D. I Corinthians 13 gives us the portrait of God's love. Such love will foster unselfishness. Christ's love is the very opposite of exploitation for it is a self-forgetful, self-giving love. The other person will not be the source of our security and happiness as we try to get our needs fulfilled through them. We will live to meet their needs instead. Now let's consider some of the things that *agape* love is and is not.

1. Love is slow to lose patience. It enables you to accept a difficult situation and wait upon the Lord to accomplish His will in His good time.
2. Love looks for kind ways to neutralize another's harshness.
3. Love is not arrogant. It does not allow you to be filled with inflated ideas of your own importance. rather, it helps you to express a servant's heart.
4. Love is not rude, but shows good manners and respect.
5. Love is not demanding of its own "rights." It helps you to yield advantage to the person loved.
6. Love is not hypersensitive or easily hurt.
7. Love does not delight in another's failures, but is loyal to truth and right. Love has the ability to live with the inconsistencies of others. It enables you to accept the fact that all humans make mistakes.

E. It is motivated by choice, by the will or commitment and not necessarily by feelings. It is nurtured by one's spiritual life with God. It is behaving lovingly toward your spouse, whether or not you feel like it and whether or not he or she responds positively toward you. It is love by the act of the will regardless of the merit or performance of the person loved.

Scriptures for Study:

1. *I John 4:7* This verse identifies the source of true love and also the kind of people who are called to show this love to others. Identify these two factors.

2. *II John 5, 6* In these verses, the apostle John indicates that genuine love is not without boundaries of right and wrong. What is the standard for expressing genuine love? _____

3. *Revelation 2:3,4* As you study verse four, what three steps can you identify for reclaiming *agape* love that would apply to a marriage that needs a revival of genuine love? _____

Launching, guiding and application questions:

1. What are the three qualities that Paul look for when he wanted to measure the spiritual growth of believers according to I Thessalonians 1:3?
 2. How does the verse, Matthew 5:44), show that *agape* is not a feeling first, but rather an obedience choice of the will?
 3. What does the Lord Jesus say is a practice by which believers could make the best impression on the watching world according to John 13:35?
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Personal Applications:

Some of the key teaching about *agape* love is found in the following verses, look for insights about God's love and write in a practice application for your own life.

- I John 3:10-11 _____
 - I John 3: 14-15 _____
 - I John 3:16-19 _____
 - I John 3:23-24 _____
 - I John 4:7-10 _____
 - I John 4:11-14 _____
 - I John 4:17-18 _____
 - I John 4:19-21 _____
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WHY DO WE HAVE MARITAL SHIPWRECK?

Lesson Three

Introduction:

Why do we have so much marital heartache? The old ship of matrimony that God launched in the Garden of Eden has been caught in a cyclone of change. Out of every dozen wedded couples, according to some experts, nearly six will jump overboard, five will stay lashed on deck because of utilitarian interests-- children, career, family, church, etc.-- without joy or much love, and only one will enjoy what could be called a "total" marriage, where they will share a lifetime of happiness. A Gallup poll found three of four women arguing that if they could turn back the calendar they would not pick the same husband.

Memory Verse: I Peter 3:7

AIM: Helping us to understand the sources of marital failures, and some immediate considerations about our part as men.

Launching Questions:

1. What things do you see in our culture, or society, that have influenced the home toward its ruin? Discuss!
 2. What major tools do you feel that Satan is using to dismantle homes?
 3. Do you feel that men are more prone to ignore the things that cause a home to break apart? If so, why?
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I. PRESSURES OF OUR AGE THAT INFLUENCE OUR MARRIAGES:

Could it be that the following attitudes or sin problems in our culture has almost drowned the institution of marriage?

A. The emphasis upon self-fulfillment and self-identity is one of the major problems. The cry, "I want to be free or let me be my own person!" is typical of the me-first, self-exalting age in which we live. Each thinks the world ought to revolve around himself. The man shows off his wife like a new car. When her paint job fades and her engine loses its get up and go, he's ready to trade her in for a new model. He marries his dream girl because she will speed him on the road to success. When she doesn't turn him into an instant wonder, he turns to another women more promising. This is the attitude among many unsaved men. What about us?

B. A second cause of marriage malaise in these times is the overemphasis on sex. It is promoted as physical enjoyment totally apart from love and the sanctity of marriage which is so clearly described in Scripture. Such an overemphasis on sex has given many people expectation standards for the physical union that are totally unreal, hence, they feel something is wrong with their marriage or their spouse.

Someone has said that the wedding night is unexciting for many a lost person because they have open their presents before Christmas and find themselves bored by the celebrations.

C. The pace of modern life is a third factor in problem marriages.

We find ourselves in the midst of a daily "rat race" and as the saying goes, "the rats are winning." Busyness steals time and soon intimacy and loving closeness is not longer enjoyed. In fact some men purposely, but maybe unconsciously, give much time to others--business associates, golfing partner - - in order to have little time for their mate. In fact busyness may be the excuse to avoid intimacy. Such men rarely do or say anything endearing or sentimental to their spouse.

Unfaithfulness is often the last straw in a strained, arms-length relationship as the suffering half is tempted to find emotional satisfaction elsewhere. The home is only a crossroads service station where they meet for refueling.

D. Marital harmony is disturbed by the spirit of materialism.

Many a business man is sacrificing marital happiness on the altar of success. Such men work long hours and take long trips to keep climbing the corporate ladder, only to find that when they reach the top their marriage has crashed on the rocks below.

Money problems usually are symptoms, not causes. A husband gets even with the frigid wife by withholding money. Or a wife takes revenge on her husband's indifference by going on a charging spree. One or both are undisciplined, selfish, and irresponsible.

E. Communication block is another sign that a marriage is in trouble.

The blockage builds up like river silt, a little at a time and so slowly its hardly noticed. The couple drifts apart gradually, each opening channels of communication outside the home, until finally they are like two strangers sharing a table in a crowded restaurant.

F. The little sentiments and courtesies of courtship fade like the flowers of the wedding day.

Each takes the other for granted. The glue of romantic love starts to crack under the weight of the little irritations and resentments that smolder beneath the surface of daily life. The little gifts, kisses, and attentive actions vanish in the hurry and scurry of life. The marriage is in trouble.

II. PROVIDING ANSWERS IN THIS AGE OF MARITAL MISERIES

There are many Biblical answers that the godly, dedicated husband and father can put into practice to build his marriage and home regardless of the difficulties that may be faced.

A. Accept your mate for who she is. We are commanded to accept others whom God has put into our lives even as He accepts us into the family of God. (See Romans 15:7.) Acceptance makes a big difference. The very success of your marriage may hinge upon the acceptance of your spouses total person. If you truly love you mate, you will continue to be blind to her many faults. Love can be delightfully blind, even in marriage.

B. Don't take your wife for granted. She is one of those special and glorious gifts that God has given you. She is as much a gift as Eve was on the day God brought her to Adam. Can't you see God, the Father, bringing her down a path to Adam? Can't you see God has given your wife to you just as surely and magnificently? Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above and your wife is one of those gifts. (See James 1: ; Ephesians 5:20; I Thess. 5:18.)

C. Become the "heart" of the home, and not just the head. In describing a man qualified for leadership in the church, the apostle Paul describes this role as that of a "manager." The husband, as a leader, needs to be sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of the team members. He is expected to carry the heavier load, honoring his wife as the weaker vessel. (See I Peter 3:7.) He ought to be concerned about the inroads of destructive forces that we considered in the first main point. The husband is the representative of God in the home. He should be the initiator and sustainer of the family's spiritual life. It is manly to lead the family in Bible reading, to teach the family to pray and to talk about spiritual values and issues.

Look at I Corinthians 16:13,14.

These verses have five significant applications to fathers and husbands. Use a Bible commentary or other helps to understand this passage fully and then complete the chart on this next page. This is part of Paul closing exhortation which we need to heed as men today.

"Watch ye" for as long as we are in this world we are in the place of danger, we are surrounded by pitfalls and snares on every hand. (See Mark 14:38.) We dare not trust ourselves and we cannot trust the world through which we journey.

"Stand fast in the faith" is a command we must embrace for so many people blow hot and blow cold. We must embrace the whole counsel of God, understanding doctrine as we walk in truth. The wife and family desperate need our consistency and stand on the Word of God. (See Matthew 4:4; 11 Timothy 1:14.)

"Quit ye like men" was a reproof from Paul because some of them were acting like babies; some were divided into sectarian groups. He had fed them with milk and not meat for they were fussing, quarreling Christians. (See I Corinthians 1:1-10.)

"Be strong" reminds us of I John 2:14 which speaks of young men in the faith who were strong, overcame satan, and were men of power for the Word of God abided in them.

"Let all your things be done in love" brings to focus again the great importance of a walk in divine love. (See Ephesians 5:1,2.)

Now complete the chart below as a study and for teaching. (Write in your thoughts and Biblical concepts as they apply.)

Actions Commanded herein:	Meaning of this instruction:	Practical insights and applications:
"watch ye"		
"stand fast in the faith"		
"quit you like men"		
"be strong"		
"let all your things be done with love"		

MEET YOUR WIFE'S BASIC NEEDS

Lesson Four

Introduction:

We have stated earlier that we all have two great needs: to love and to be loved and to feel worthwhile. While this is a general view there are many specific elements of a wife's needs that the husband and father is expected to fulfill. Anything that we can do to meet these basic needs is an act of love. Failure to meet them results in heartache, disillusionment, despair and possibly even divorce. (See I Peter 3:7.) This portion tells the husband to dwell with the wife according to knowledge. He is hereby commanded to understand the needs of his wife. These are unique and special needs that every wife has in every day life. Such understanding will cause the husband to benefit greatly in his own life as he meets his wife's needs each day.

In Genesis 3:16c God states that the wife will look to her husband and in so doing she will naturally desire 1) affection, 2) security, and 3) acceptance.

My intent in this lesson is to deal with some specific aspects of marriage that mean a lot to the wife. These are truisms, although it is not always easy to give a lot of Scripture to support each point.

Aim: To help the husband to understand some special needs that every wife has and to aid his fulfillment of those needs.

Memory verse: I Timothy 4:16

I. TREAT YOUR WIFE WITH STRENGTH AND GENTLENESS:

(See Romans 12:19; 13:7, 8.)

No matter how self-reliant a woman may be; regardless of her intelligence, capacity, and drive; even if she seems dominant there is something within a wife that makes her to desire to "lean" on a man. She would like to be swept off her feet, and then taken care of with gentleness and strength. The wife has an inner need for emotional security and a quiet strength that is gentle and tender.

This combination of strength and tenderness is not easily achieved if one does not possess it innately, but you can work at it. If the man does not meet these needs she may well develop some manly traits herself.

II. GIVE HER AMPLE PRAISE AND REASSURANCE.

(See Titus 2:24; 3:8.)

Instinctively a wife and mother feels a need for someone to protect her and her children, and to provide for the family. The role of a mother renders the woman much more vulnerable and insecure.

Women need considerable reassurance as a "responder" to the husband who is to be the "initiator" in God's plan. Such reassurance can be given in the form of praise, recognition, commendation and simply by saying often: "I love you!" When a woman asks, "Do you love me?" she isn't asking for information she is asking for reassurance. The husband, as head, is generally to be the initiator who considers way he can assist and help his wife by his comments, consideration, and good works.

III. AVOID CRITICISM

A husband who constantly criticizes and condemn his wife can produce numerous negative results in his wife. She may become deeply depressed through repressing her hostility; developing one or more physical symptoms, since the mind tends to hand its pain over to the body. She may become --

1. hostile,
2. emotionally unresponsive,
3. or sexually frigid;
4. lose her identity through being constantly beaten down;
5. unload her resentment onto the children and cause emotional disturbances in them, or
6. decide to give up on the marriage.

It would be wise to make a study of James 3:1-12 at this point and consider the power of the tongue for wrong. What a contrast this is to Galatians 5:22,23 and the fruit of the Spirit in the God controlled life.

(Teacher make a study of these two portions above to the extent time will allow and yet be able to cover the major points of the lesson.)

In James 3:17-18 the writer speaks of godly wisdom which is peaceable, pure, easy to entreated, full of mercy and good fruits and without hypocrisy and partiality. We desperately need to practice godly wisdom as we are control by the Holy Spirit. A regular barrage of criticism, even when warranted, is always destructive. In fact, almost all criticism is destructive. There is usually a better way to achieve results. Just because we are married, we do not have the right to be insulting, harsh, cruel, tactless, and hard hearted.

IV. RECOGNIZE HER NEED FOR TOGETHERNESS

No two women are identical in their needs, of course, but in general women tend more often than men to require a sense of "togetherness." A wife may often want her more of her husband's time and attention than he feels like giving her. Along with this a wife has a need of her husband's concern about many little things in life. Men are usually less sentimental than women and attach less importance to such things as birthdays, anniversaries, and other gestures that mean much to a wife. Love is not just a feeling; it involves actions which can mean a great deal to a woman.

This is part of dwelling with her according to knowledge. Sometimes she would like to be left alone, but more often she needs your closeness. Mix closeness with tenderness.-- a hug, a squeeze of the hand, a kiss.

V. GIVE HER A SENSE OF SECURITY

A woman's need of security is much greater than most men imagine. It can be provided by a husband who is strong, gentle, and considerate. It should be the natural outworking of loving the wife as Christ loves the church, and as the man loves his own body. (See Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29.) The Word of God gives us many verse which speak of our security in Christ. If we fulfill His command to love as He loves we also will give security to our wife.

Security to a wife may be made meaningful because of any of the following

1. The husband cares for the "nest," the house, by regularly repairing, showing concern in many ways for its condition.
2. The husband gives her spending money, or a personal checking account, savings account, or whatever is meaningful to bring a sense of security.
3. The husband shows deference, concern, and mature responses to everyday needs and burdens that the wife shoulders.

Some things may not seem logical to you, don't run your marriage on a study diet of logic; feelings are just as important as logic, often more so.

VI. RECOGNIZE THE VALIDITY OF HER MOODS

Women tend to have somewhat strong mood variations than most men. Part of this can be attributed to the monthly cycle. I wonder if most of us men understand this, or the need to be patient and consideration? You may as well accept her variations in mood as inevitable. She may be as strong as a rock one day and cry over or be upset over most any little thing the next day. Don't take it personally or tell her to "snap out of it." This again is a part of dwelling with your wife according to knowledge or the recognition of the need of loving her as you would want to be loved.

VII. GIVE HONOR TO YOUR WIFE (I Peter 3:7)

A. What does it mean to honor you wife?

1. Give her due respect.
2. Maintain her authority to the children and wherever she has delegated authority.
3. Protect her person from others as well as from herself for she might be a work-a-holic and would bring destruction to her own health if the husband did not counsel her.
4. Support her credit. Give honor where honor is due as you credit her for the good things she does. You cannot never praise your wife too much.
5. Delight in her conversation; show by the way you listen and share that her thoughts, deliberations, and interests are important to you.
6. Afford her ample support by purchasing the things that she needs as she needs them. Buy or give her the money for personal effects, clothing, etc., without having to be begged.
7. Place due trust and confidence in her; let her know that you trust her fully and confide in her accordingly.

B. How does the Word of God relate to this? I think that a study of Colossians 3:15-17, 19 would help us. If you have a Bible commentary you might desire to study this portion further beyond my comments below.

Colossians 3:15 -- Don't do anything through which you would lose the protection and guidance of God's peace. His peace is to "garrison" you about as soldiers would a fortress. Anything that we begin to do as men and we sense a loss of the peace of God -- we need to immediately halt, take inventory, and wait upon God and His Word for direction.

Colossians 3:16 -- Allow the Word of God to dwell in you richly. That is, the Word of God must take up an abode in our hearts and lives so that daily living is the *out-living of the In-living* Word of God. It must become the ingrafted word.

(See James 1:19.) We must meditate in it, and memorize the Word of God for ourselves. We will never fulfill the foregoing -- so needed in our relationship with our wives without being in the Word of God and the Word being in us.

Colossians 3:17 -- Seek to do everything for His glory and honor as you endeavor to do all things in His Name. This necessitates analyzing our lives, our homes, and our daily walk with the Lord. This should take place with thanksgiving. To lead in Christ's Name is to think upon what Christ would do if He were there in our place. Have you thought about **what** Christ would do? Can you do, in Christ's Name, what you plan to do in any given case?

Colossians 3:19 -- God commands us men to love our wives and not to be bitter toward them. It is so easy for a man to become bitter -- in spirit, in word, in action, and in attitude. This is devastating to a wife. It will shut the door to any good communication and companionship which we also need on a daily basis. In a positive way endeavor to daily shower you wife with God's love.

Launching, guiding, or application questions:

1. If you made a list of things you could be and do toward you wife from Philippians 2:1-4, what would you include?
 2. According to James 3:13-16, what is worldly wisdom like?
 3. Why do we so readily respond in this way? (Make a list of these things in James and consider if they are in your life.)
 4. Since we are, in salvation, accepted totally in Christ, how should this position cause you to show acceptance to your wife?
 5. How does Ephesians 6:10-12 condition your walk with your family?
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QUOTES

We think others are thinking of us; but they aren't. They're just like us--they're thinking of themselves.

He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own.

Speak well of everyone if you speak of them at all--none of us are so very good.

When looking for faults, use a mirror, not a telescope. -- The Good Ship Grace

Every man should have a fair-sized cemetery in which to bury the faults of his friends.
-- Henry Ward Beecher

Most of use can live peacefully with our own faults, but the faults of others get on our nerves. -- Banking

Rare is the person who can weigh the faults of others without putting his thumb on the scales. -- Langenfeld

The way some husbands find fault with their wives, you'd think he was getting a reward for doing so. -- Ed. Watke

A fellow shouldn't hide his faults too carefully. Perfection in others isn't easy to admire.
-- Chinese proverb.