

Biblical Covenant in the Home

Covenant Order and Personal Accountability

Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry
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Book 5 - Chapter 01 – Study 04

The Brutal Truth About Marriage
What You Demand, What You Contribute, and
What Your Conduct Produces

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The Brutal Truth About Marriage

What You Demand, What You Contribute, and What Your Conduct Produces

Before you read this study, settle something honestly within yourself. Are you willing to examine your own conduct, or are you mainly looking for another explanation of why your spouse is the problem?

You probably already know what you want from your marriage. You can explain where your spouse disappoints you, which promises have been neglected, what affection is missing, and what you have requested repeatedly. But can you examine yourself with that same attention?

Can you describe what you contribute, where you have failed, and what your conduct has produced without immediately turning the conversation back toward your spouse?

This study will keep returning to three questions:

What do you demand from your spouse?

What do you contribute to your marriage?

What does your conduct actually produce?

If you answer only the first question, you will avoid the examination this study requires. Your expectations need to be considered, but so do your responsibilities. You cannot honestly magnify another person's failures while continually excusing your own.

This study requires you to examine your own conduct before God. Several sections directly address the wife's responsibilities, but that emphasis does not establish that she is the greater problem in every marriage. Whether you are reading as a husband or a wife, do not use these pages to keep score while avoiding correction yourself. Knowing your spouse's responsibilities does not release you from fulfilling your own.

A husband cannot use this study to excuse his own cruelty or neglect. Paying the bills does not authorize intimidation or humiliation, and marriage does not authorize demands to participate in sin, or threats and violence. Seeking protection or responsible help in response to abuse is not disloyalty. Likewise, respectful disagreement is not contempt, and illness, disability, pain, or exhaustion must not be confused with deliberate neglect. Name the wrongdoing accurately; do not manufacture an accusation.

But where you are deliberately doing wrong, stop hiding it behind softer descriptions. Making commitments you have no intention of keeping is dishonesty. Demanding sacrifice while refusing your own responsibilities is a double standard. Humiliating your spouse to obtain your way is cruelty. Using affection, money, or cooperation to punish your spouse or compel surrender is manipulation. If these descriptions accurately identify your conduct, defending yourself will not correct it. You need to face what you are doing.

You Know What You Want From Your Spouse; Do You Know What You Owe?

You may be able to explain your husband's responsibilities without hesitation. He should provide, protect, listen, spend time with you, remain faithful, show affection, and take responsibility for the household. You want him to care about your concerns and understand what you need. Those expectations deserve examination according to Scripture. But now turn the question toward yourself. What does he receive from you?

Can you explain your responsibilities as clearly as you explain his?

Ephesians 5:33 KJV *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

The passage places responsibility on both of you. Your husband must examine how he “loves” you, and you must examine how you “reverence” him. Neither instruction becomes irrelevant because the other person has faults. If you expect faithfulness, examine your own faithfulness. If you want consideration, examine whether you consider him. If you demand that he listen, examine whether you allow him to speak.

Your disappointment deserves an honest hearing, but disappointment does not give you permission to ridicule your husband, interrupt every attempt to express himself, dismiss his concerns, or treat his needs as an inconvenience. When he speaks, are you trying to understand him, or are you preparing to defeat what he says?

When he makes an effort, can you acknowledge it, or do you immediately explain why it still does not count?

When he raises a concern about your conduct, do you address it, or do you redirect the conversation toward his failures?

You need more than the statement, “I love my husband.” Your love must become visible in how you treat him. If your words claim love while your conduct repeatedly communicates contempt, you need to examine the contradiction.

Titus 2:4 KJV *That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,*

Scripture calls you to learn and practice love toward your husband. That responsibility cannot be reduced to whether you feel pleased with him today. If you are a husband reading this, you face the same examination. You cannot demand honour while speaking contemptuously to your wife, or require consideration while refusing to consider her. Both of you must stop treating your spouse’s responsibilities as commands and your own as suggestions.

Your Household Responsibilities Are Real Work

Your household requires work whether you feel like doing it or not. Food must be obtained and prepared, bills must be paid, resources must be managed, children need care and instruction, and the home requires attention. Someone carries each responsibility. When you deliberately neglect yours, the consequences do not disappear. Your spouse may carry the additional work, the household may suffer, or both may happen.

1 Timothy 5:8 KJV *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* Provision is a serious responsibility before God. This passage addresses care for one's household and relatives; it does not assign every form of provision exclusively to husbands. Within the understanding of complementary responsibilities presented in this study, the husband bears primary responsibility for ensuring material provision, while the wife bears primary responsibility for the care and management of the home. That distinction does not prohibit you from earning income or excuse him from practical household work.

Titus 2:5 KJV *To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

1 Timothy 5:14 KJV *I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.*

If your husband carries the financial provision and you have undertaken management of the home, both of you are doing substantial work. He cannot reasonably demand that you take your responsibilities seriously while treating your contribution as worthless. You cannot reasonably expect him to finance the household while deliberately neglecting the care you have undertaken. Despising household work does not make it unnecessary. Someone must still do it.

This is not a demand for a spotless house or performance beyond your capacity. It is an examination of willingness, effort, and dependability. If both of you work for income, the household responsibilities still need to be carried, and your arrangement must honestly account for time, health, children, and the work each of you already performs. Your husband must not ignore your exhaustion, and you must not ignore his. Neither of you should use a discussion of roles to leave the other carrying an unreasonable burden.

Proverbs 31 describes a wife who cares for her household while acquiring food, buying a field, planting a vineyard, and selling goods. It does not command every wife to have paid employment. It shows that productive enterprise can contribute to the household rather than contradict its care.

Proverbs 31:27 KJV *She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*

Ask yourself whether you take the welfare of your household seriously. Do you carry the work you have undertaken, or expect your husband to absorb the consequences of your neglect? If you are reading as a husband, ask the corresponding question. Neither of you should confuse being entitled to care with being exempt from responsibility.

What Is Inside the Treasure Box?

Some dating advice and social-media messages tell you that you are the prize and that a man must earn you. Before accepting that message, ask what it means. Does it encourage you to recognize your dignity and reject mistreatment, or have you taken it to mean that your presence alone entitles you to provision, devotion, and sacrifice while your own conduct goes unexamined?

You deserve to be treated with dignity. But being a woman does not automatically make you a faithful wife. Being attractive does not establish honesty, wisdom, kindness, or dependability. A man may desire you and still discover that living with you involves contempt, manipulation, neglected responsibilities, and demands that never end. His attraction does not make those things valuable to the marriage.

Proverbs 31:10 KJV *Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.*

Look carefully at what Scripture praises. It speaks of a virtuous woman. The chapter then describes her trustworthiness, work, wisdom, kindness, care for her household, and fear of the Lord. You cannot claim the praise while refusing to examine the character it describes.

Proverbs 31:30 KJV *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.*

Your appearance may attract attention, but attention does not prove that you are prepared for marriage. Being pursued does not establish that you are dependable. Being wanted does not release you from responsibility. If you expect a husband to bring faithful character into the covenant, you must examine whether you bring it yourself.

Think of the treasure box as an illustration of what is beneath the outward attraction. When your husband lives with you, what does he discover?

Can he trust your word?

Do you consider his needs?

Do you carry your responsibilities?

Can you receive correction?

Do you speak with wisdom and kindness, or does the attractive exterior conceal dishonesty, contempt, selfishness, and a refusal to change?

Do not answer those questions by explaining how desirable you are. **The question is what your conduct contributes to the marriage.** If you expect him to provide, protect, listen, remain faithful, and sacrifice, explain what he can depend on from you. You cannot honestly demand a devoted husband while treating your own faithfulness as optional.

Proverbs 31:11–12 KJV *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.*

Notice that the trust described here is supported by conduct. She does him good. She gives him reason to trust her. Being called a wife does not automatically establish that dependability, and calling yourself the prize cannot substitute for it.

If you are reading this as a husband, examine yourself just as honestly. Your income, strength, status, or confidence does not automatically make you a faithful husband. You may provide materially while behaving cruelly. You may speak about leadership while refusing sacrifice. Financial success does not excuse dishonesty, intimidation, or neglect.

Your worth as a human being is not erased by your failures. But your human worth does not make destructive conduct valuable to your marriage. Both of you must answer for what you do. You

cannot use attractiveness, income, or the title of husband or wife to place yourself beyond examination.

Before marriage, examine character rather than allowing attraction to conceal it. Within marriage, this illustration calls you toward correction and faithfulness. It does not make the covenant disposable whenever your spouse disappoints you.

When you call yourself the treasure, are you describing faithful character, or expecting that label to exempt your character from examination?

Examine the Beliefs You Brought Into Marriage

You may have entered marriage carrying beliefs you learned long before meeting your spouse. Perhaps you heard that men are worthless, that women cannot be trusted, that a husband is useful only for what he pays, or that a wife should never question anything. Familiarity does not make those beliefs righteous. They need to be examined.

Your spouse must be judged honestly by their actual conduct. They are not responsible for every man or woman who disappointed someone in your family. If you were taught that men are foolish, unnecessary, or unworthy of respect, ask whether those beliefs still influence how you hear your husband. Do you dismiss his counsel before considering it?

Do you interpret every expectation as oppression?

Do you assume that acknowledging his wisdom makes you weaker?

If you are a husband who was taught that women are inferior or that authority means you never have to listen, your belief requires the same scrutiny. Neither of you can make an inherited prejudice righteous by calling it wisdom. At the same time, family history does not explain every disagreement. You must examine what is actually happening rather than claim knowledge of another person's hidden motives.

Philippians 4:8 KJV Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

The passage begins with what is true. You must not invent good qualities to conceal serious wrongdoing, but neither should you continually ignore genuine good because you are occupied with dissatisfaction. Can you name your spouse's faithful conduct as readily as you name their failures?

Can you acknowledge improvement, or do you judge every present action through the worst event you remember?

Truth requires an honest account of both good and wrong.

Your Words Can Build Him Up or Tear Him Down

Examine how you speak to your husband. You may want his attention, affection, confidence, and companionship, but what does he encounter when he tries to speak?

Does he receive a hearing, or does he meet interruption, ridicule, immediate correction, and another explanation of why he is wrong?

Proverbs 12:18 KJV *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*

Scripture does not treat your tongue as harmless. A legitimate concern needs to be addressed, but addressing a concern and attacking your husband's character are different things.

Saying, "You agreed to pay this bill, and it is overdue," identifies a failure that needs correction. Saying, "You are useless. I cannot depend on you for anything," attacks the man himself. One gives him something specific to answer; the other declares him insignificant. Do not pretend those statements accomplish the same thing.

Proverbs 14:1 KJV *Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.*

Your speech is part of what you contribute to your home. You can raise a concern without humiliating him, disagree without treating him as beneath you, and request change without denying every good thing he has done. If you refuse those distinctions, stop describing the resulting hostility as merely a communication problem. Examine the contempt itself.

An evening may begin with conversation, affection, or a sincere attempt to reconnect. Then you interrupt him before he finishes, mock his explanation, or dismiss what matters to him. An ordinary conversation becomes another judgment of his character, and the closeness can disappear quickly. He may become quieter or stop sharing what he was trying to explain. An evening that could have strengthened companionship becomes another experience of being dismissed.

One sharp exchange does not erase every good thing in a marriage. But repeated attacks can damage trust and make openness increasingly difficult. If your husband expects ridicule, he may become reluctant to speak. If his concerns are continually dismissed, he may begin to feel that his presence matters only when he is providing something. Before asking why he seems distant, examine what happens when he comes near. **You cannot honestly demand openness while repeatedly humiliating the person who opens himself to you.**

His withdrawal still requires examination. He remains responsible for his response, but his responsibility does not erase the damage caused by your speech.

Proverbs 12:4 KJV *A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.*

Mocking your husband in front of the children is not harmless humour. Sharing his vulnerabilities so your friends can laugh at him is not fellowship. Using a gathering to embarrass him is not an appropriate way to settle a disagreement. You may obtain laughter, sympathy, or agreement from the people listening, but you may also damage his trust in you. He should be able to disclose a weakness without wondering when it will become entertainment or ammunition.

Seeking responsible counsel about a genuine problem is different from recruiting an audience to belittle your husband. Be honest about which one you are doing.

You May Not See What Your Words Are Doing

Your husband may continue fulfilling his responsibilities while feeling deeply discouraged. He may work, pay the bills, care for the children, and sit beside you while privately wondering whether anything he does matters to you. Do not assume that because he continues functioning, your words have caused no damage.

You do not have to call him worthless to make him feel continually inadequate. Sometimes the problem is the repeated correction of ordinary things. You notice how he parked, which route he took, a missed turn, or some minor difference in how he completed a task. Each incident becomes another occasion to point out what he did wrong. Meanwhile, what he did faithfully passes without acknowledgment.

Consider a husband who helps provide a vehicle for the household and drives his wife when she asks. During the journey, she repeatedly criticizes his route, comments sharply on a missed exit, and monitors minor details as though he cannot be trusted to manage the drive. When they arrive, she finds another fault with where he parked. What could have been an ordinary journey together becomes another experience of being examined and found lacking.

Perhaps there was a legitimate concern. A dangerous maneuver needs immediate attention. A parking habit that damages something should be discussed. Sharing directions can be helpful. But there is a difference between addressing a specific concern and making nearly every task an occasion for dissatisfaction.

Ask yourself whether your response is proportionate to what happened. Did he make a small mistake, or do your words treat it as evidence that he is generally incompetent?

Could you explain the concern without sarcasm?

Is there a reason to correct him immediately, or have you developed a habit of commenting whenever he does something differently from you?

You also need to examine whether your standards apply to yourself. If you make the same mistake and expect patience, why does his mistake receive a sharp remark?

If you want understanding when you miss a turn, forget something, or complete a task imperfectly, offer the consideration you expect to receive.

Over time, repeated fault-finding can make participation feel burdensome. Your husband may become reluctant to drive, help with a task, or volunteer an idea because he expects another correction regardless of what he does. Then you may complain that he no longer takes initiative. Before reaching that conclusion, examine what happens when he does.

That does not release him from responsibility. He still needs to address legitimate concerns and communicate his discouragement honestly. But you cannot reasonably ask him to participate while refusing to examine whether your response makes every attempt unnecessarily difficult.

His financial contribution does not exempt him from care when using shared property. Your concern for that property does not exempt you from kindness when speaking to him. Both responsibilities remain.

You may never directly call your husband incompetent, but examine the message your repeated criticism can communicate. When nearly everything he does receives another correction, when your preference is consistently treated as the only acceptable method, and when his judgment is dismissed without consideration, he may hear, “You cannot do this properly. I know better. Your effort is never enough.” That may not be the message you intend, but you need to consider whether your conduct

conveys it. A particular mistake requires a particular correction; it does not justify treating him as incapable. If you continually place yourself in the position of the competent person correcting the inadequate one, your criticism can begin to communicate superiority rather than a desire to resolve the concern.

When you say, “Sorry about my husband. He is an idiot,” or, “If I want anything done properly, I have to do it myself,” the attack becomes more explicit. You are no longer identifying a particular mistake. You are degrading the person. Calling those remarks jokes does not remove the humiliation. You may forget what you said shortly afterward while he remembers it long after the conversation ends.

Your judgment may carry considerable weight because you are his wife. That does not mean every husband automatically believes everything his wife says. It means you should take seriously the trust and vulnerability present in marriage. Is he hearing that a particular action needs correction, or that you regard him with contempt? Those are different messages.

You also need to examine how you respond to his emotions. Do you expect patience whenever you feel overwhelmed but ridicule him when he expresses hurt?

Do you want him to listen to your distress while calling his distress weakness?

Have you asked him to explain what is wrong and then used his answer against him in a later argument?
If so, you are practicing a double standard.

Strength does not mean that he cannot be exhausted, discouraged, lonely, or wounded. His feelings do not authorize wrongdoing, and neither do yours. You cannot demand that he remain composed through every attack while excusing your own cruelty

because you were upset. An apology afterward does not make repeated humiliation acceptable. Self-control must begin changing what happens before the apology.

Proverbs 31:26 KJV *She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.*

Wisdom does not require dishonesty, and kindness does not require silence about wrongdoing. You can identify a neglected responsibility without directly calling your husband worthless. or even indirectly making your husband feel worthless.

You can disagree with his judgment without mocking his intelligence. You can explain a practical concern without turning an ordinary mistake into an accusation against his character.

When he demonstrates genuine faithfulness, acknowledge it. Do not make his failures the only things you ever name. If he keeps a difficult commitment, receives correction, or makes a sincere change, stop speaking as though nothing has changed. If he carries a substantial responsibility, do not allow a minor imperfection to become the only part of his effort you acknowledge.

Your praise must be truthful. It is not flattery or a technique for controlling him. Encouragement may strengthen his efforts, but it cannot guarantee transformation or make you responsible for his every decision. He must answer for his conduct, and you must answer for yours.

If you are reading as a husband, apply the same examination to how you speak to your wife. Repeatedly correcting her over minor matters while ignoring her work can communicate the same contempt.

You may have a real concern to raise, but that does not give you permission to make your spouse feel beneath you while raising it. Address the concern accurately, govern your tone, and stop turning ordinary life into a continual examination that only the other person can fail.

Do You Want Leadership or Agreement?

1 Corinthians 11:3 KJV *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*

Ephesians 5:25 KJV *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

Your husband's position is under authority. He is not placed above God's judgment, and his headship carries responsibility for love and sacrifice. He cannot reasonably invoke Christ's example while refusing the sacrifice that example requires.

Do not reduce his responsibility to bringing money home. A husband who takes headship seriously must study Scripture, examine his own obedience, understand the responsibilities within his household, and consider how his decisions affect his wife and children. He needs to understand your responsibilities so that he can support you wisely, just as he must understand his own. That knowledge does not give him permission to treat you as a project while neglecting himself.

If you are a husband, face the weight of what you claim. You cannot demand recognition as the head while refusing the preparation, attention, sacrifice, and accountability that faithful leadership requires. You cannot expect your wife to receive your teaching while you refuse to examine it against Scripture. If you want to lead your household toward obedience, practice that obedience yourself and honestly examine concerns raised about your conduct. Where Scripture exposes sin, the facts reveal an error, or you have neglected a responsibility, acknowledge it and make the necessary correction, regardless of who brought it to your attention. A difference in preference does not automatically establish wrongdoing, and listening does not require agreement. But your position as head does not make you exempt from correction that is true.

If you are a wife, do not dismiss these responsibilities as though your husband has little to carry. But do not conclude that his responsibility removes yours. You also must study Scripture, know God's commandments, and obey Him personally. Neither of you should use the weight of your own work to belittle the other's contribution.

Now examine what you mean when you say that you want your husband to lead. Do you consider his counsel honestly, or accept it only when it confirms what you already wanted?

When he raises a concern, proposes a necessary change, or asks you to fulfil an agreed responsibility, do you hear him, or immediately call him controlling?

An expectation is not automatically control. An expectation that you keep your word, discuss shared spending, carry agreed responsibilities, or stop humiliating him deserves an honest answer. Threats, intimidation, forced compliance, and treating personal preferences as unquestionable divine commands must also be named accurately. They are not made righteous by calling them leadership. But you must not use the word "control" to escape every examination of your conduct.

Within the understanding of biblical headship, the husband carries the deciding responsibility when a household decision remains unresolved after honest consultation. Listening to his wife does not require her approval of every decision, but he must seriously consider her counsel, relevant facts, and the welfare of the household. His judgment is not automatically God's command, and he remains accountable to God for his decision and for correcting an error. The wife's disagreement alone does not establish wrongdoing, just as his position does not authorize sin, coercion, or disregard for her welfare.

Are You Willing to Learn From Your Husband?

Being teachable requires more than remaining quiet while somebody speaks. You can sit through a conversation while inwardly dismissing everything said. You can agree outwardly to end the discussion and then continue exactly as before. Neither response demonstrates that you have honestly considered the instruction.

Ask yourself whether your husband can teach you anything. Can you identify something true or useful that you learned from him and put into practice?

When he offers sound counsel, do you receive it, or search immediately for a reason to reject it?

Are you willing to ask him a sincere question, consider his answer, and acknowledge that he helped you understand something?

The issue is not whether he knows more than you about every subject. He does not. The issue is whether you allow any room for his wisdom or have already decided that your judgment must prevail.

Proverbs 12:15 KJV *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*

Consider what happens when you bring a problem to your husband. Do you want his companionship and consideration, or do you expect his attention while treating his perspective as unwelcome?

There is a difference between asking him to listen before offering advice and deciding that his advice has no place in the conversation.

You may genuinely need to finish explaining what happened before discussing solutions. Say that clearly. Asking him to understand your experience first is reasonable, and he should not rush to prescribe an answer before hearing the problem. Listening

can itself be a meaningful contribution. Not every difficult experience requires an immediate solution.

But examine whether “I just need you to listen” has become a standing instruction that his voice is never welcome. If you repeatedly bring him concerns, reject every respectful attempt to help, and never allow room for his perspective, the issue extends beyond the timing of advice. You are asking for his attention while excluding his participation.

His suggestion may be mistaken, impractical, or unnecessary. You are not required to accept it merely because he offers it. But can you consider it without irritation or contempt?

Can you explain why it does not fit, or does the very fact that he offers counsel offend you?

Saying that you do not need to be “fixed” should not become a way to dismiss every useful contribution he makes.

Your husband may offer practical help because he cares about your welfare. Do not automatically treat that concern as an attempt to control you. At the same time, his desire to help does not establish that he has understood the situation or found the right answer. Both of you need to distinguish an offer of help from a demand for compliance.

Where a problem affects your shared finances, children, commitments, or household responsibilities, neither of you can reasonably require the other to remain indefinitely silent. You may need time to explain, calm down, or think. But a matter that affects both of you eventually requires room for both perspectives. Your distress does not remove his responsibility to consider the problem, and his position does not remove your right to be heard.

Sometimes you may reject a suggestion from your husband and later welcome similar counsel from somebody else. Examine that honestly. Was his suggestion wrong?

Was it explained poorly?

Did circumstances change?

Or did your attitude toward him prevent you from considering something reasonable?

Accepting counsel later does not automatically prove deliberate disrespect. But if you habitually dismiss sound counsel because your husband is the source, you need to confront that resistance. Truth does not become less true because he explains it. A useful suggestion does not become worthless because he makes it.

You cannot reasonably demand leadership while refusing any possibility of learning from the man you married. If every attempt to explain a concern meets dismissal, every suggestion becomes an argument, and every correction is treated as an offence, examine whether you are helping him carry responsibility or making reasonable cooperation unnecessarily burdensome. Claiming that you want a partner means little if you continually refuse to consider what that partner contributes.

If you are reading as a husband, ask yourself the corresponding questions. Have you listened long enough to understand her concern?

Have you offered sound teaching and explained it clearly?

Have you demonstrated the conduct you require, or confused teaching with repeating your demands until she gives in?

Her request for listening is not automatically rejection, and her disagreement alone does not prove that she is unteachable.

Your wife's sound counsel is not automatically competition. Acknowledging that she is right does not destroy faithful leadership. Examine what either of you says against Scripture, relevant facts, and your actual responsibilities. A preference does not become correction simply because it is expressed strongly, but a genuine error does not disappear because you dislike the person who identifies it.

Asking to be heard is reasonable. Demanding attention while treating your spouse's perspective as inherently worthless is not. Both of you must remain willing to consider sound counsel and change your conduct when the correction is true.

Do You Support the Rules or Quietly Undo Them?

Consider a household in which reasonable expectations have been discussed concerning chores, bedtime, schoolwork, respectful speech, or family study. Your husband attempts to maintain those expectations, but when he is absent, you disregard them or allow the children to ignore them. When he returns, he discovers that the arrangement operates only when he personally enforces it.

You may not have openly challenged him. You may simply have decided that the rule was inconvenient or that you preferred something else. But quiet disregard can still undermine the work he is trying to carry.

He may respond by writing another schedule, making another chart, explaining the expectations again, or establishing another reminder. None of those tools can resolve a pattern in which one parent deliberately cancels what the household has agreed to practice. A schedule cannot substitute for cooperation.

If you believe an expectation is unwise, explain your concern. If circumstances require an exception, discuss it honestly. If a decision is harmful, protect the child and address the harm. But do not agree to a reasonable arrangement and then quietly undo it while leaving your husband to carry the conflict that follows.

You cannot tell him to take responsibility while repeatedly removing the cooperation needed to carry it. Neither can he establish unreasonable demands without considering your knowledge of the children, their needs, or the work the arrangement places on you.

Within the understanding of headship, your husband carries responsibility for leadership. That responsibility requires him to seek wise counsel, listen, and make decisions he can answer for before God. It does not mean every preference he expresses becomes a command. Your role as helper requires honest

participation rather than treating every decision you dislike as optional.

Genesis 2:18 KJV *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

Examine whether your conduct provides that help. Does your husband have a dependable partner in carrying reasonable household responsibilities, or must he repeatedly discover that the arrangement has been abandoned without discussion?

Mother does not always know best. Father does not always know best either. Neither title establishes that every judgment is correct. Both of you need wisdom, and both must remain accountable to God. But neither of you should use your imperfections as an excuse to keep the household divided or make commitments meaningless.

Ordinary Imperfection Does Not Cancel Responsibility

Ephesians 5:22 KJV *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

1 Peter 3:1 KJV *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;*

These instructions do not assume a flawless husband. Within the biblical order taught, submission is not a reward you give only after he reaches perfection. He will make mistakes, just as you will. An ordinary mistake needs honest correction; it does not automatically justify contempt or a permanent refusal to cooperate.

Your husband needs room to acknowledge an error and correct it without having that error used indefinitely to discredit every future decision. You need that same consideration. Neither of you should demand the freedom to learn while denying it to the other.

But these passages do not guarantee that your obedience will make your husband repent or that submission will eliminate danger. His wrongdoing remains his responsibility. Different responsibilities also do not establish unequal human worth.

1 Peter 3:7 KJV *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

If you are a husband, your wife is an heir together with you. You have no permission to erase her dignity, voice, or responsibility. Your words must remain open to examination against Scripture. You are not Christ Himself, and confidence does not make you infallible.

If you are a wife, examine whether your cooperation exists only when your husband agrees with you. Can you receive sound counsel from him?

Can you support a reasonable decision even when another approach would have been your preference?

Can he depend on you to keep what you have agreed to do?

Do not call yourself willing to be led while refusing every opportunity to learn, cooperate, or follow through. If you are a husband, do not call yourself a faithful leader while dismissing a sound concern without examining it or refusing to practice what you teach.

Listening to your wife requires honest consideration; it does not require automatic agreement or compliance with her wishes. Her feelings deserve consideration, but neither her feelings nor her preferences establish that your decision is wrong.

Examine the concern against Scripture, the relevant facts, and your responsibilities. Where you have sinned, made an actual error, or broken a commitment, acknowledge it and correct it. Where the difference concerns a personal preference, discuss it respectfully without treating either person's preference as a command. Neither of you should confuse being heard with being obeyed.

Stop Replacing Follow Through With Promises

Consider what happens when you and your spouse agree to work on your marriage. You identify changes you want, your spouse identifies a particular commitment they want, and both of you agree. Your spouse begins making observable changes, but your commitment remains unfinished. When the lapse is discussed, you apologize and ask to begin again. Yet the same commitment is neglected again.

At that point, another apology does not answer the problem. The question is whether the promised action will occur. This applies whether you are the wife or the husband. Regret does not complete the work, and an explanation does not erase the commitment. A sincere apology matters, but it must lead somewhere.

James 1:22 KJV *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

Agreement, understanding, and intention are not fulfillment. Stop asking your spouse to treat renewed words as proof of completed change. Identify what you agreed to do, address the obstacles honestly, renegotiate an unrealistic commitment openly, and fulfill a reasonable commitment faithfully. If you repeatedly forget the same responsibility, what will you change so that it actually happens?

Repeating the same explanation does not solve the problem.

You must also recognize that a contribution in one area does not automatically fulfill a promise in another. This is especially important when your spouse has clearly identified a need, you have discussed it, and you have agreed to take a particular action. Becoming more affectionate does not complete an agreed commitment to study together, change a harmful habit, stop interrupting, speak respectfully, manage spending responsibly, or carry a neglected household responsibility. Likewise, paying a bill or completing a chore does not fulfill a promise to listen, spend time together, or address repeated harshness. Those contributions

may be valuable and deserve acknowledgment, but the specific commitment remains unfinished. Do not assume that something you prefer to offer answers the need your spouse actually expressed. Hear the request, discuss whether it is reasonable, and be clear about what you are agreeing to do. If you cannot fulfil the agreement, address that honestly and discuss a change. Do not quietly replace it with something else and then insist that your spouse should consider the promise fulfilled.

Do Not Move the Standard to Erase Effort

Your spouse may make requested changes while you remain disappointed. That disappointment can be discussed, but it does not justify a false account of what happened. You cannot honestly say, “You have done nothing,” while admitting that specific changes occurred. Neither can you claim that every effort was insincere merely because it did not produce the feeling you expected.

Saying, “I still do not feel close to you,” identifies an experience that needs attention. Saying, “You never wanted to be with me,” claims knowledge of another person’s intention. Do not treat those statements as interchangeable. Acknowledge actual effort, explain what remains missing, and examine your own contribution with equal care.

You may also find yourself waiting for your spouse to become acceptable before fulfilling your own responsibilities. “When you change, I will change,” can preserve the conflict indefinitely. Your spouse’s ordinary imperfections do not suspend your responsibility to speak truthfully, keep your word, and govern your conduct.

At the same time, wanting an agreed commitment fulfilled is not the same as requiring perfection. If your spouse repeatedly asks you to keep a reasonable promise, they deserve an honest answer. You must distinguish legitimate accountability from impossible expectations, just as you must distinguish withdrawing to punish someone from taking necessary time to calm down or maintain safety.

If discouragement is growing, explain it clearly where it is safe to do so. Do not expect your spouse to read every change in your silence. If they tell you an agreement is slipping, address the agreement rather than merely criticizing their disappointment. One person can repent and change their conduct, but one person

cannot make the other become faithful. Full restoration requires participation from both.

Remaining in the same house does not prove that partnership exists. Paying the bills does not prove that companionship exists. Continuing to provide because you fear for your spouse's welfare does not, by itself, repair the relationship. You must examine whether you are participating in the covenant or merely receiving its benefits.

Do Not Use Money or Intimacy to Obtain Compliance

Your financial responsibilities require honesty. If an outing is unaffordable, say so and take that limit seriously. Agree on payment before making plans, and keep a promise to reimburse your spouse. Do not require debt as evidence of love. If you are a husband, your financial contribution does not purchase the right to humiliate or control your wife. If you are a wife, his willingness to provide does not make his resources unlimited or his financial concerns irrelevant.

1 Corinthians 7:3–5 KJV *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

The responsibilities described here are mutual. Deliberately treating sexual intimacy as payment for purchases, obedience, or surrender turns affection into leverage. If you say, “I will give you intimacy if you buy this,” or, “I will show affection only after you agree with me,” examine what you are doing. You are using marital closeness to obtain compliance.

But do not falsely label every difficulty with intimacy as manipulation. Pain, illness, exhaustion, fear, and damaged trust require attention and care. Marital responsibility never authorizes forced or pressured sexual activity. Consent remains necessary. If you use Scripture to demand sexual access while ignoring your spouse’s suffering, you are abusing the teaching.

Neither of you should exploit the vulnerability of the other. Neither spouse’s neglect excuses adultery. You remain responsible before God for your own sexual conduct.

Your Children Are Watching the Example You Set

You may tell your children to respect their father, but what do they see when you speak to him?

Do they see you listen, consider his concerns, and disagree without humiliation?

Or do they see interruption, ridicule, eye-rolling, and a repeated message that his words do not deserve serious consideration?

Do not assume that your instruction cancels your example. If you tell your children to honour their father while continually treating him with contempt, you are giving them conflicting lessons. You need to examine the lesson your conduct makes visible.

Ephesians 5:33 KJV *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

Your responsibility does not stop when the children enter the room. That is precisely where your example becomes visible to another generation. When you mock your husband, dismiss every concern, or portray him as incompetent, your children may begin treating him similarly. You cannot honestly ignore your contribution and then act surprised when they repeat the disrespect they have witnessed.

This applies to you as a husband too. If you humiliate their mother, speak over her, or dismiss her concerns as worthless, you are demonstrating conduct they may carry into their own relationships. Neither parent has permission to teach contempt and then condemn the children for practicing it.

You may insist that you never directly told your children to disrespect their father. Examine what you showed them instead. You did not need to give a formal lesson if your daily conduct repeatedly demonstrated that his concerns could be mocked, his reasonable instructions disregarded, or his attempts to speak interrupted. Your example deserves examination even when you never intended the children to imitate it.

What Does Your Conduct Teach About Scripture?

Suppose your husband attempts to establish a reasonable time for family Bible study. What example do you provide?

Do you participate honestly, ask questions respectfully, and examine the teaching against Scripture?

Or do you mock the effort, announce that it is pointless, or encourage the children to disregard it?

Your response can communicate something about the importance of that time. If you continually treat the study as an inconvenience beneath your attention, do not pretend that your children cannot notice. Examine whether your conduct is helping cultivate seriousness toward Scripture or encouraging indifference.

But participation does not require pretending that every interpretation your husband offers is correct. A sincere question is not rebellion. Neither is identifying an error from Scripture. Your husband must make room for honest examination, explain the teaching clearly, and consider the children's ages, understanding, and attention.

Acts 17:11 KJV *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

You should demonstrate that willingness to receive and examine the Word. Your husband should welcome it. Neither of you should turn family study into a contest in which agreement proves loyalty and questions prove disrespect.

A missed sitting because of work, illness, or exhaustion is different from habitual contempt. Identify what is actually happening. Where you are deliberately undermining a reasonable effort to study Scripture, stop excusing that conduct. Where the study itself is being handled poorly, address the problem honestly rather than allowing resentment to govern the household.

Examine What Your Example Teaches and Produces

Your children learn from the ordinary conduct they see at home. They observe how you greet one another, handle disagreement, keep promises, share responsibilities, and respond when you are wrong. **Your example can strengthen your instruction or interfere with the very thing you are trying to teach.**

When your conduct agrees with your words, children can see what obedience looks like in practice. When your conduct repeatedly contradicts your words, you create another obstacle to their understanding. You tell them that a certain habit is necessary, yet demonstrate that you consider yourself exempt.

Consider asking your children to keep their rooms organized. If you make an effort to keep your own belongings in order, your example supports your instruction. But if your room is continually a mess, you leave things wherever you please, and you expect someone else to clean up after you, your children may question why you demand something you will not practice yourself.

There may still be good reasons for requiring a clean room. Food left lying around can attract pests. Belongings scattered across the floor can be damaged or become a tripping hazard. Children need to learn responsibility and care for what they have. Your inconsistency does not make those reasons disappear, but those reasons do not excuse your inconsistency either. **A sound instruction still needs an honest example.**

Parents and children do not have identical responsibilities, privileges, or schedules. A parent may need a phone for work while a child needs to put a device away to finish homework. Those differences can be explained. But a difference in responsibility must not become an excuse for practicing the same carelessness, dishonesty, or disrespect you condemn in your children.

The same examination applies throughout the household:

When you require respectful speech: Do you speak respectfully yourself?

If you forbid insults but call your spouse names, mock the children, or humiliate someone when you are angry, your actions undermine your instruction. You are demonstrating that disrespect becomes acceptable when the person speaking has enough authority.

When you require listening: Do you allow others to finish speaking?

Telling a child, “Listen when someone is talking,” while routinely interrupting your spouse teaches a conflicting lesson. Show them how to hear a concern, ask a question, and disagree without ridicule.

When you require honesty: Do you tell the truth even when it costs you something?

If you ask a child to say you are not home when you simply do not want to answer the phone, you involve them in the dishonesty you claim to oppose. If you make a mistake, let them see you admit it rather than invent an excuse.

When you require responsibility: Do you complete your own agreed work?

A child who is expected to finish chores should also see parents take their responsibilities seriously. If circumstances prevent you from completing something, explain honestly and make arrangements rather than silently leaving the burden to someone else.

When you require self-control: How do you respond to frustration?

If you punish a child for shouting while you regularly shout, threaten, or slam things in anger, your example confuses the standard. Let your children see you pause, govern your speech, and return to the matter calmly.

When you require faithfulness: Do you keep your promises?

If you promise to help with homework, attend an event, or spend time together, follow through. When circumstances change, acknowledge the disappointment and explain truthfully. Do not expect children to treat their commitments seriously while yours are repeatedly forgotten.

Consider also something as simple as arriving home. Do you acknowledge your family, ask about their day, and listen to the answer?

Do you greet your spouse with consideration, or speak warmly to everyone else while treating your spouse as an interruption?

A hug or kiss can express affection, but it must not become a test of loyalty. A child can greet you respectfully through words, a smile, or another acknowledgment without wanting physical contact at that moment. Their hesitation alone does not prove that the other parent has trained them against you. Model the consideration you want to encourage.

God's commands agree with His character. He calls us to holiness and is Himself holy.

1 Peter 1:15–16 KJV *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.* We are accountable to practice what we teach. This does not mean a parent must be flawless before giving instruction. It means that when you fail, you must acknowledge the failure and correct it. Saying, “I spoke wrongly, and I need to change,” supports the standard you are teaching. Defending your conduct while condemning the same conduct in your child weakens it.

Confusion also grows when parents undermine one another. If a father gives a reasonable instruction and the mother tells the children to disregard it, or a mother establishes a reasonable requirement and the father dismisses it, children receive

competing directions. They may begin choosing whichever parent gives the answer they prefer at the moment.

Discuss disagreements directly with your spouse and establish clear expectations. Do not ask children to settle your dispute, carry hostile messages, confirm accusations, or choose sides. Agreement must never require defending harmful conduct, but ordinary disagreements should not become opportunities to weaken or humiliate the other parent.

Ephesians 6:4 KJV *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Father, examine how you lead and correct. Mother, examine how you participate and respond. Both must consider whether their conduct helps the children understand and follow sound instruction.

Your children have outside influences and make their own choices. Your failures do not explain every act of disobedience, and your inconsistency does not give them permission to disregard every reasonable instruction. Nevertheless, before blaming school, friends, entertainment, or the child's personality, examine what you repeatedly demonstrate at home.

Then ask what your conduct actually produces. Does your honesty strengthen trust?

Does your listening make difficult conversations possible?

Does your handling of money honor household agreements?

Does your fulfillment of responsibilities protect the household, or repeatedly leave avoidable burdens for someone else?

Galatians 6:7 KJV *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Examine those consequences honestly. An unhappy spouse does not automatically prove the other spouse is guilty, and a child's disobedience does not prove that every failure began with the parents. Identify the actual conduct rather than turning a painful outcome into an unsupported accusation.

Repeated lying damages trust. Humiliation wounds dignity. Deliberately neglecting agreed responsibilities leaves work for someone else. Saying, "That is not what I meant," does not settle those matters. Your intention matters, but you must also answer for what you did.

If you acted wrongly, acknowledge the specific action and correct it. If you were misunderstood, explain truthfully and listen carefully without admitting to something you did not do.

Practice the honesty, consideration, order, and self-control you require from your children. When you fall short, let them see repentance and correction. Your example should help them understand your instruction, rather than repeatedly give them a reason to question whether you believe it yourself.

Stop Defending What You Need to Repent Of

You have now examined responsibilities, character, speech, leadership, promises, affection, money, your example before the children, and the consequences of conduct. What have you recognized in yourself?

Do not leave it unnamed. Saying, “I need to work on things,” can become another vague statement that changes nothing.

Be specific. If you interrupt your husband and dismiss his concerns, acknowledge that. If you ridicule your wife when you are frustrated, name it. If you repeatedly promise to participate and fail to follow through, face that failure. If you use affection to punish, neglect agreed work, or refuse correction while demanding it from your spouse, stop hiding behind a general admission.

Proverbs 28:13 KJV *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

Confession and forsaking belong together. Stop using an apology to end the discussion while preserving the conduct. A truthful apology acknowledges what you did; it does not immediately become an accusation against your spouse. Their wrongdoing can be addressed separately. You must not use it to escape your own.

Matthew 7:5 KJV *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

Self-examination does not mean your spouse has no faults. It means you cannot claim righteousness by pointing at theirs. If you have recognized wrongdoing in yourself, your responsibility is to respond to it.

Identify the promise you need to fulfil, set an achievable time, address the obstacle, and do the work. If your speech is contemptuous, stop the insult and state the actual concern without attacking the person. If you have neglected an agreement, fulfil it or discuss an honest revision. If you have created financial strain, face the numbers and change the spending. If you have exposed

private matters to ridicule, stop and acknowledge the breach of trust.

If your children have witnessed you humiliating their other parent, correct your example. Where appropriate, acknowledge to them that your conduct was wrong without drawing them into private marital details. Show them that responsibility includes admitting error and changing behaviour.

When you demand that your spouse receive correction, demonstrate that you can receive it too. Trust does not return merely because you demand it. Give your spouse reason to believe the change through consistent conduct. Forgiveness does not make repeated wrongdoing harmless, and it does not require pretending that confidence has already been restored.

James 2:17 KJV *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*
Do not confuse knowing the instruction with obeying it. Return to the questions and answer them honestly: What do you demand from your spouse?

What do you contribute to your marriage?

What does your conduct actually produce?

If you are a wife, beauty does not excuse selfishness, affection does not cancel dishonesty, and frustration does not authorize humiliation. Your husband's imperfections do not make your contempt righteous. If you are a husband, provision does not excuse cruelty, headship does not make you infallible, and your wife's failures do not make your neglect acceptable.

Neither of you can honestly demand faithfulness while defending deliberate unfaithfulness in your own conduct. Name what you are doing, stop defending it, repent before God, and fulfil the responsibility you have neglected. Demonstrate the change through consistent conduct.

An apology cannot substitute for the change it promises.

Continue With the Detailed Studies

This study confronts conduct that needs honest examination. To study the foundations and the work of restoration more deeply, continue with:

Book 5, Chapter 1, Study 1, Marriage as Covenant, Not Convenience;

Study 2, The Husband as Head Under God;
and Study 3, The Wife as Helper in Covenant Order.

The examination of division continues in Book 5, Chapter 2, Study 1, When Two No Longer Walk Together, and Study 2, Satan's Strategy Against the Family.

For further examination of wounds, repentance, and rebuilding, read Book 5, Chapter 3, Study 1, The Root Beneath the Ruins; Study 2, Uprooting the Root; and Study 3, Learning to Walk Together Again.

Read the Scriptures in context, examine the teaching, and apply the correction to yourself.

