

THE DUTIES OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a relationship which requires two people to become “one flesh” (Genesis 2.24). The term one flesh implies more than the sexual union, I believe it refers to a union of purpose.

In order to accomplish this union of purpose, both parties in the marriage must understand their role and allow the other to fulfill that role. For instance, the husband is to be the head of the wife, Ephesians 5.23. This necessarily infers that the wife is to submit to her husband, verse 22. Wives are to respect their husbands, while at the same time, husbands are to love their wives as their own body, verse 28.

Most passages which speak of the duties of husbands also speak about the wives duties. 1 Peter 3 addresses the wife’s responsibility. She is to be submissive in verse 1, be chaste in verse 2. Conduct herself in a modest fashion as described in verses 3 and 4. Trust in God and submit to her husband in verses 5 and 6.

In return the husband is to dwell with his wife with understanding. What does this mean? I believe it involves the following:

Accept his responsibility to leave his father and mother and build a life together with his wife (Genesis 2.24), provide for his family (1 Timothy 5.8), make sacrifices for the good of his children and wife (Ephesians 6.4).

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3.7)

Have an awareness of her needs, according to knowledge means to understand, and have moral wisdom. Self centeredness will destroy most relationships. Friendships will not last long if one person is not concerned about the feelings of another. What do you think will happen if a husband is self centered?

He is to adjust to her as the “weaker vessel.” The term vessel is used here

representing the woman. She is weaker in a comparative sense to a man physically speaking. She is not inferior mentally, spiritually, or emotionally. The typical woman is smaller than the typical man. He is to consider her physical needs. This may have meant to chop the fire wood in times past; today it may mean to move the furniture or help get a dish off the top shelf.

Appreciate her as the weaker vessel. To honor means to value appropriately. The NIV uses the word respect. I believe the words cherish and nourish as used in Ephesians 5.28-29 gets to the point, ***“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.”*** That which we value we cherish and hold dear to our hearts, husbands are to treat their wives with tender affection. To nourish means to supply what is lacking or needed.

When both people in a marriage are working according to God’s plan both are making sacrifices and both are benefiting. ***“He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord” (Proverbs 18.22).*** – Dennis Tucker { reprinted from 2003 }