

The Marriage Relationship

Genesis 3:16, “Then he said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.”

Genesis 2:24, “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”

Ephesians 5:22-24, “22-For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23-For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. 24-As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.”

Ephesians 5:21, “And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

1 Corinthians 11:3, “But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

Ephesians 5:25-28, “25-For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26-to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. 27-He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. 28-In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself.”

1 Peter 3:1-2, “1-In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over 2-by observing your pure and reverent lives.”

1 Peter 3:7. “In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.”

Colossians 3:18, “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.”

Colossians 3:19, “Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.”

What can we learn from these verses about the relationship between men and women in marriage? I believe there are 3 main points in these verses:

1- God takes the marriage relationship very seriously.

- 2- God expects the woman to honor and respect her husband and his authority over her.
- 3- God expects the man to love, respect, and honor his wife or there will be hell to pay.

Practically speaking, just what does this look like in real life? Let's look at 4 possible relationship scenarios and how the roles of the husband and wife should look:

SCENARIO 1: HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE BOTH CHRISTIANS

In God's eyes, this is the best scenario for marriage and should be the goal of all marriage counseling, to have a husband and wife equally yoked in their belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

ROLE OF THE HUSBAND: To lead his family and his wife as Christ leads His church. To honor God through his relationship with his wife, putting her needs ahead of his own. To love, honor, and respect his wife and treat her as an equal partner. Willing to die for his wife. Pray daily that God teaches him to become a great husband for his wife, a great blessing to her, and a great leader of her. Pray with his wife daily and study God's Word together. Be encouraging to his wife.

ROLE OF THE WIFE: To submit to the authority of her husband as the husband submits to Christ and Christ submits to the Father. To honor God through her relationship with her husband, putting his needs ahead of her own. To love, honor, and respect her husband as the head of their marriage. Willing to sacrifice for her husband. Pray daily that God teaches her to be a great wife for her husband, a great blessing to him, and to give her great wisdom in their marriage. Ask her husband to pray with her and study God's Word together. Be encouraging to her husband.

ROLE OF THE MARRIED COUPLE: Be an example of oneness in Christ. Teach others how to have Godly marriages.

SCENARIO 2: HUSBAND IS A CHRISTIAN, BUT THE WIFE IS NOT

In God's eyes, this is an unequally yoked couple. It may sound harsh, but the best advice is that they do not get married until both the husband and wife are equally yoked in their belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

ROLE OF THE HUSBAND: To lead his family and his wife as Christ leads His church. To honor God through his relationship with his wife, putting her needs ahead of his own. To love, honor, and respect his wife and treat her as an equal partner. Willing to die for his wife. Pray daily that God teaches him to become a great husband for his wife, a great blessing to her, and a great leader of her. Ask his wife to pray with him daily and study God's Word together. Pray daily for his wife's salvation. Be encouraging to his wife.

ROLE OF THE WIFE: Be open to her husband's leadership and seek to learn about Godly marriage.

SCENARIO 3: HUSBAND IS NOT A CHRISTIAN, BUT THE WIFE IS

In God's eyes, this is an unequally yoked couple. It may sound harsh, but the best advice is that they do not get married until both the husband and wife are equally yoked in their belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

ROLE OF THE HUSBAND: To love, honor, and respect his wife. Be open to his wife's encouragement towards Jesus Christ and a Godly marriage.

ROLE OF THE WIFE: To submit to the authority of her husband, even though he may not be walking with Christ. To honor her husband as the leader of their family as long as he is not leading them away from or dishonoring God. To honor God through her relationship with her husband, putting his needs ahead of her own. To love, honor, and respect her husband as the head of their marriage. Willing to sacrifice for her husband. Pray daily that God teaches her to be a great wife for her husband, a great blessing to him, and to give her great wisdom in their marriage. Ask her husband to pray with her and study God's Word together. Be encouraging to her husband. Ask God for wisdom in leading her husband into a salvation relationship with Jesus Christ.

SCENARIO 4: NEITHER THE HUSBAND OR THE WIFE ARE CHRISTIANS

This couple has no solid foundation on which to build their marriage. It may sound harsh, but the best advice is that they do not get married until both the husband and wife are equally yoked in their belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

ROLE OF THE HUSBAND: To love, honor, and respect his wife. Be open to encouragement from others towards Jesus Christ and a Godly marriage.

ROLE OF THE WIFE: Be open to her husband's leadership and seek to learn about Godly marriage.

Perhaps you will see some marriages of non-Christians that appear to be "good" marriages, however the end result is that their marriage will not honor the Creator of the universe and one or both partners will spend eternity in hell versus having a glorious eternity of joy in heaven.

Please do not confuse this paper on marriage relationships with the role of women in church leadership and leadership in society in general. They are two unrelated subjects. For a clear picture of what women in leadership looks like, see my paper titled, "Women in Church Leadership".