

## "Love and Respect"

God's message to husbands was to love their wives, and His message to wives is that they respect their husbands. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Stay tuned and we'll see why He spoke about love and respect.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way. The Lord always gives the best instructions that provide for the peace and happiness of His people. The Lord's instructions on marriage is no exception. God unites us in marriage and gives us the guidance that we most need to live happy and godly lives. Marriage, as God wills it, provides love, security, and the stability to our lives. It's truly the foundation of the family. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be part of your life each week.

As Christian husbands and wives, we should do what is right, even when doing what is right isn't easy. Jesus set the example. 1 Peter 2:21 to 23 says, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he didn't revile in return; when he suffered, he didn't threaten, but He continued entrusting himself to him who judges righteously." Jesus loved us even when we were unlovely and sinful. He died for us, even when we were helpless and ungodly.

All marriages go through rough spots and challenges. I know that Jackie and I have had our share of parenting responsibilities, financial challenges, and health problems. And I'm certainly not the perfect husband, and Jackie's had to put up with all my weaknesses. But through it all, we've never forgotten the commitment we made to each other in the presence of God and witnesses. Both of us vowed to love and respect each other. And when we turn to Scripture, love and respect are the key to happiness in Scripture.

Now if you want to study more about marriage, we offer this study free for the asking. If you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now if you live outside the United States, we have materials free online, and you can stream this program on our website, [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

Larry Owsley will lead the Edmond church in song, we'll read from Ephesians 5:22 to 27, and see the values of love and respect in marriage.

Our scripture reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 5 verses 22 to 27. And discusses the importance of love and respect in marriage. "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." That's a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father we're grateful for Your love, and we're grateful Father for the teaching that You give for husbands and wives. Father help us as we look toward our mates, that each of us will be serving You as we serve them. And Father may our love for You, and our worship, and our obedience to you always be full and free. In Jesus name, Amen."

The Scriptures teach that the husband is the head of his wife, and she is to be subject to him. In our day, when equality seems to be so important, some think it's unfair that God gave authority to husbands over their wives. This authority, however, never gives men the right to abuse or dominate their wives. Any man who treats the woman he married unkindly is breaking God's law. He's not only disobeying God, he's also deceiving himself. Only a fool believes abusing his wife will benefit him. Wise husbands understand the better they treat their wives, the more their wives will respond with love and respect.

When husbands fail to love their wives, their wives react with disrespect. When husbands sense a lack of respect from their wives, they often act in ways that are unloving. So these feelings of being disrespected or unloved tear apart the marriage. But, when husbands show love and wives show respect, the marriage prospers and strengthens. You can make your marriage brighter and better, husbands, if you can learn to demonstrate Christian love to your wife.

If a disrespected husband will love his wife anyway, and if a wife who feels unloved will respect her husband anyway, they can start putting their damaged marriage back together. A wise husband pays attention to his wife. He's able to see what she needs to be happy. Every woman needs to feel her husband is close to her and cares about her. Some husbands keep their distance from their wives, and then their wives feel unloved because of it. Wives need husbands who will open up enough to share their thoughts and feelings. She feels unwanted or unneeded when he closes up and shuts her out of his life. When he keeps his life secret from her, she feels he doesn't love her enough to trust her. Wives need to know their husbands are loyal to the marriage, that he's not looking elsewhere. She also needs to know that he sees her as the most important person in his life (except for God). She needs to know that he cherishes and honors her.

The most important thing a husband can do is love his wife. 1 Corinthians 13:4 to 8 says that, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it's not arrogant or rude. It doesn't insist on its own way; it's not irritable or resentful; it doesn't rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." Now love may start with a warm feeling, but we must learn how to love our wives; and wives must learn how to love their husbands.

Some folks are harder to love than others, and love will require a lot of patience and kindness. Love demands that we set "ourselves" aside. I can't love someone else if I'm only focused on myself and I'm self-centered. Love rules out envy, arrogance and rudeness. It learns to let small things slide and not be irritated all the time. Love bears what marriage demands, believes and hopes the best in our spouse, and it endures. Love determines to put the best interests of our spouses before our own, regardless of the cost. Jesus loved the church like that, and He asks husbands to love their wives that way too.

Loving your wife involves taking the time to be close to her and to listen. The happiest couples spend time with each other, talking and listening to each other. Husbands and wives should spend a good while each day in meaningful conversation. Turn the television off, get away from the computer, and talk face to face. A wise husband will take the time to share his life with the woman that he loves. He wants to know about her and is willing to invest his life in her by listening. To fail to pay attention to your wife is to say to her that you don't care what she has to say. Such behavior is abusive not loving.

James 1:19 to 20 says, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires." Much of the anger in our homes would go away if people would take the time to listen and to

understand the people they love. Listen to your spouse, let her finish her sentences, don't act rashly or hastily. Try to understand her life from her point of view.

Treat her with kindness 1 Peter 3 and verse 7 says: "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." Some men have the awful attitude that because husbands are the head of the wife, that this position of authority gives them the right to dominate or abuse their wives with their power. Well any man who treats his wife like a doormat is violating the will of God. Abusive power is a marriage killer. Husbands, treat your wife kindly, tell your wife how important and valuable she is to you. Watch for the loving smile on her face when you do that! The Proverb writer said, "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain." (Proverbs 31, verses 10 to 11). Notice how the wise husband trusts his wife's judgments and realizes how fortunate he is to have her. It's utter foolishness for a man to expect his wife to love him and meet all his needs, while he treats her unkindly. Husbands, love your wives.

Jesus taught, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7 and verse 12). I'm amazed how kind and good people can be to those outside the family but treat their own families with disrespect. If we could see ourselves as we really are and how we treat our families, we might be quite shocked. If we had a tape recording of our words or a video of our actions, we might see ourselves the way our families see us. Some folks never consider how difficult they make their family's lives. That's why, every now and then, it's good for all of us to step back, take a long look at how we have treated our families. Empathy is the ability to see things through the eyes of another and to feel what she is feeling, or he is feeling. Sometimes we look at ourselves through other's eyes. And when we do that, what are we going to see? And will we like what we see?

A wise husband will also be the spiritual leader in his home. It's spiritually important for couples to spend time together singing, praying, and reading the Bible. There's great value in a husband and wife privately praying together every day. Prayer allows husbands and wives to take their burdens together to God the Father. It allows them to express in each other's presence and in the presence of God their concerns and their needs. When two people pray with each other, they develop a spiritual intimacy and unity that builds their relationship. Christian marriages, where God is the center of the home, where love and where patience and forgiveness are present, and where God's laws are obeyed, almost never end in divorce. God's ways are not only right ways; they are the best ways. When people truly live out their faith, the way God intended, they find their marriages to be the happiest and most loving. Husbands, do your best to make your home what God would have it to be. Be the spiritual leader in your home. God's way is truly, truly, a way of blessing.

Peter said in 1 Peter 3:1 to 6: "Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives—when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Don't let your adorning be external—that is the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening." Sarah is an ideal for Christian wives to follow. As an

apostle Peter was inspired of God and as an elder, Peter himself was married. He knew the great blessing of having a good wife.

God says in 1 Corinthians 7 and verse 2, "But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband." Now making your home as God teaches is critical to a happy life. Proverbs 12 and verse 4 says, "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones." In Proverbs 18:22 Solomon said, "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD"; but in chapter 19:13 he said, "a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping." Just like a dripping faucet, a quarrelsome wife is a constant irritation. Proverbs 19:14 says that, "Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD." A man who has a godly and wise wife is doubly blessed. Proverbs 31 gives us a marvelous insight into a virtuous woman, who would be a prize to any man. It begins in Proverb 31:10 with the words, "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies." And he ends the chapter by saying, "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised" (Proverbs 31 verse 30).

What kind of wife does God wish women to be? Paul says wives should show respect for their husbands. Many women find it hard to respect men. Some have stereotyped men as crude or juvenile, and unworthy of respect. Masculinity, as a whole, has been under attack in our culture. Some actually think we don't need men at all. But humanity couldn't function or reproduce itself without men. Many men work very hard and sacrifice a great deal to provide for their wives and families. Many men spend hours caring for their wives and children every day. Many men are sensitive and understanding when they need to be and firm when they need to be. Men who love their wives and live the Christian life of honesty, integrity and purity will be men worthy of respect. Some men, sadly, live without integrity or purity. They treat their wives harshly. How tragic! Wives, however, should still respect their husbands.

Why is that true? How can a wife respect her husband when he doesn't deserve her respect? Well she gives him respect, both because of who he is, but more so because of who she is. She gives her husband respect, because she belongs to God and it's God's will. We must do what is right regardless of what others do. Just as I'd tell a husband to love a wife that's hard to love, I'd tell a wife to respect her husband even when he's hard to respect. Paul said in Ephesians 5:33, "Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband."

Let's pray together. "Oh Father as husbands and wives help each of us to do Your will, to give love and to give respect that each of us deserve and need. And Father we pray that You'll bless the homes, bless them with Your love, and bless them as they live for You, and share Your will. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen."

If you want a better marriage, start looking at yourself. How are you treating your spouse? Now instead of constantly criticizing, start evaluating yourself. You can help your marriage by improving yourself, rather than putting down your mate. Let's clean up our own lives before we focus on the faults of our spouses. Women, do you show respect to your husband? Men, do you show love to your wife? Men are you meeting your wife's needs for love and attention, and women are you honoring your husband by meeting his needs?

We can't change our spouses by making unreasonable demands, but we can change ourselves. When we change for the better, our spouses will appreciate those changes and will want to change as well. Improving our marriages begins with improving our hearts. Nothing more makes a more loving

heart, than entering into a loving relationship with God. When the love of God is in your heart, you'll become more loving and respectful to your family.

Does the love of God live in you? Are you committed to Christ? To become a Christian you must have love for and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his word. Loving God means turning away from the sinful and hurtful ways of the world and embracing the loving and righteous ways of Christ. We call this repentance, a change of heart that leads to a change of life. Upon your repentance and the confession of your faith, the Lord asks you to be baptized in His name, immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Now in baptism you'll be united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection according to Romans 6:3 to 7. The Lord will wash away your sins and add you to His church. And you'll be in God's family. I hope you'll come to Christ today. Please don't put off getting right with God.

We hope today's study about love and respect has stirred your heart to make your home a better place. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry," that's one word. And we also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us, don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Focus your heart on God today by worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us, tell a friend about the program. Let them know that you watch and encourage them to watch too. As always we say God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.