

HUSBANDS, LOVE
Colossians 3:19
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. **One person** said “Your marriage may have started off as an ideal, then your marriage becomes an ordeal, and then you start looking for a new deal.”
2. Have you heard of the three rings of marriage? The engagement ring, the wedding ring, then the suffering.
3. God created marriage to be one of the greatest blessings in life, but you have to do it God’s way. If you try to use God’s creation without applying His instruction, then you end up with destruction. This is why so many marriages fall apart.
4. Today we are going to look at God’s instructions for husbands.
5. I am a father of four daughters. And I love them with all my heart. They are priceless to me. I would give my life for them. One day I am going to give each of them away in marriage. And when I do, I expect their husband to take good care of them; to care for them better than I do. In fact, a girl should not get married until she finds a man who will care for her better than her father.
6. In the same way, every woman on the face of the earth belongs to God. He is their heavenly Father, and He loves them more than we can imagine. He loves His daughters infinitely more than we love ours. And He did give His life for them. He shed His blood for them on the cross. And God created the institution of marriage. But He expects and demands that husbands treat His daughters well; that we treat them right. And that’s what we are going to discuss today. The husband’s responsibility in marriage. How to take care of God’s daughters in marriage.

II. TEXT

1. **Colossians 3:18-19** “18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and don’t be bitter toward them.”
2. Three Insights:
 - 1) The husband is given two commands, one positive and one negative.
Love your wife, and do not be bitter toward them.
 - 2) Both the husband and wife are called to submit. The wife must submit to her husband, and the husband must submit to love.
 1. **Ephesians 5:21 (NLT)** “And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”
 2. “Marriage is a submission competition.”
 - 3) Commanding husbands to love their wives is shocking.
 1. **NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible** “No other code on marriage relationships in the ancient world required husbands to love their wives.”
 2. **William Barclay** “In every sphere of ancient civilization, women had no rights at all. Under Jewish law a woman was a thing; she was owned by her husband in exactly the same way as he owned his sheep and his goats; on no account could she leave him, although he

could dismiss her at any moment. For a wife to change her religion while her husband did not was unthinkable. In Greek civilization the duty of the woman was ‘to remain indoors and to be obedient to her husband.’ It was a sign of a good woman that she must see as little, hear as little and ask as little as possible. She had no kind of independence and no kind of mind of her own, and her husband could divorce her almost at caprice, so long as he returned her dowry. Under Roman law a woman had no rights. In law she remained for ever a child. When she was under her father she was under the *patria potestas*, the father’s power, which gave the father the right even of life and death over her; and when she married she passed equally into the power of her husband. She was entirely subject to her husband and completely at his mercy. Cato the Censor, the typical ancient Roman, wrote: ‘If you were to catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you can kill her with impunity without a trial; but, if she were to catch you, she would not venture to touch you with her finger and, indeed, she has not right.’ Roman matrons were prohibited from drinking wine, and Egnatius beat his wife to death when he found her doing so. Sulpicius Gallus dismissed his wife because she had once appeared in the streets without a veil. Antistius Vetus divorced his wife because he saw her secretly speaking to a freed woman in public. Publius Sempronius Sophus divorced his wife because once she went to the public games. The whole attitude of ancient civilization was that no woman could dare take any decision for herself.”

3. Then Christianity comes along and revolutionizes the status of women.
 - a. **Ephesians 5:28-29** “In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church”
 - b. **Ephesians 5:33** “each one of you is to love his wife as himself”
 - c. **Colossians 3:19** “Husbands, love your wives and don’t be bitter toward them.”

III. HOW TO LOVE YOUR WIFE

1. “Love” – *agape*. This is the same word used to describe God’s love for us in John 3:16. We must love our wives the way that God loves us.
2. Four Traits of Biblical Love
 - 1) Your love must be steadfast.
 1. That is, unconditional, unwavering, unfailing.
 2. Christ loves us even though we don’t deserve it. **Romans 5:8** “But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

3. **Commentary** “Love, exemplified by Christ’s sacrificial love, is willing to pay the supreme cost and cherish the beloved even when the beloved is unworthy of that love.”
 4. Our love must be the same. Don’t love your wife only when she deserves it, but all the time. Not only when she is lovely, but when she is rude. Not only when she is young, but when she is old. Not only when she is beautiful, but even when her beauty fades. Not just when the house is clean, but even when it is messy.
 5. Sometimes your wife will get on your nerves. Sometimes she will sin against you. Sometimes she will fail to meet your needs. Sometimes she will disappoint you. Love her anyway.
 6. **Robert Quillen** “A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers.”
 7. Another way to say it is that your love for your wife must be constant. You must love her just as much after twenty years as you did on your wedding day. Christ’s love never fading, and never ending. Ours must be the same.
- 2) Your love must be sacrificial.
1. Jesus gave up His safety, comfort, and glory, to save us. **Ephesians 5:25** “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her”
 2. We must do the same. Don’t love your wife only when it is easy, when it costs you nothing, when it is convenient, when it is comfortable. Sacrifice what you want for what she wants. Put her needs, wants, and desires, before your own.
 3. In marriage your desires will often clash; sacrifice yours for hers. To meet her needs, you might have to do things that you really don’t want to do.
 4. You want an SUV and your wife wants a minivan, get her the van. You want to go to the beach for vacation and she wants to go to the mountains, go to the mountains. You want to get leather furniture and she wants cloth, get her the cloth. You want to have sex but she is not in the mood, let her have the night off. You want to watch “The Walking Dead” and she wants to watch “When Calls the Heart,” buy a second TV.
 5. **Jimmy Evans** “One of the most important ways we communicate love to our spouse is by what we are willing to give up for them.”
- 3) Your love must be sinless.
1. Jesus never sins against us – in word and deed. **1 John 3:5** “there is no sin in him”
 2. Our love must be the same. Never sin against your wife.
 3. Sin and love are opposites. The most important way to love your wife is to be obedient to God.
 4. You may give the best foot massages, but if you are physically abusive then it doesn’t matter. You may buy your wife the most beautiful

things, but if you don't show her any affection it doesn't matter. You may take your wife to church every Sunday, but if you are unfaithful then it doesn't matter.

5. This is why the best thing you can do for your marriage is to commit yourself wholeheartedly to Jesus Christ. If you are sold out to Jesus Christ and making every effort to become the man He wants you to be, and to imitate Him in every word and deed, then you will become a wonderful husband.
 6. The more you love God, the better you will love your spouse.
- 4) Your love must be servant-minded.
1. What is agape-love? It is servanthood. It is meeting your wife's needs. Not necessarily her wants, but her needs.
 2. That's what Jesus does for us.
 - a. He promises to meet all of our needs (Phil 4:19).
 - b. **Mark 10:45** "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
 - c. **Philippians 2:5-7** "Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead, he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant"
 3. To love your wife is to meet her needs. What are your wife's needs? **Pastor Jimmy Evans** wrote about the Four Major Needs of Women:
 - a. Security: She wants to know her desires and needs will be met. She wants a sacrificial and sensitive husband. This is a woman's mega-need. Women need to know they are going to be cared for by a sacrificial, selfless husband who is connected to them emotionally. For a man to successfully communicate with his wife, he must encrypt every word with security. Regardless of what the conversation is about, she must hear through the tone of his voice and his attitude something like this: Honey, you come first. You are the most important thing in my life, and you are worth anything else I need to sacrifice. You are not a burden to me. You're the love of my life. Even if I don't get what I want, you will get what you want because I will do anything to make sure you are taken care of.
 - b. Open and honest communication. Unhindered access to her husband's thoughts and feelings. She wants loving, patient, regular communication.
 - c. Soft, non-sexual affection. Hugs, kisses, back rubs; feeling valued and cared for.
 - d. Leadership: A husband who is a loving initiator of the wellbeing of the family but treats his wife as equal.

4. When I proposed to Lydia, I arranged a get together for the two of us and both of our parents. As we were sitting at the dinner table, I knelt and proposed to Lydia. Then I got a bowl of water and a wash cloth, and I washed her feet, in imitation of Christ washing the disciples' feet (my kids still cringe when I tell this story). It was a promise to serve her for the rest of my life – to meet her needs, and to do what was best for her.
5. **Jimmy Evans** “The greatest marriage is two servants in love. The worst marriage is two selfish people in love.”

IV. BITTER BEHAVIORS

1. **Colossians 3:19** “Husbands, love your wives and don’t be bitter toward them.”
2. Remember that Colossians 3:19 has two commands for the husband, one positive and one negative. The positive is to love your wife. The negative is don’t be bitter toward them. What does that mean? The NIV translates it “harsh.” It means being hurtful. Let’s go over some common ways that husbands are hurtful, bitter, and harsh toward their wives.
 - 1) Being physically abuse. There is no place for physical abuse in marriage. This may involve hitting your wife, pushing your wife, breaking things around the house, or threatening to get physical with her. When Paul listed the qualities of a godly man in 1 Timothy, one is that he is “not a bully but gentle (1 Tim 3:3).” The word “bully” literally means a “striker.” A Christian man should never hit a woman, much less his wife. Training for this begins when your boys are young. When I was in kindergarten I was sent home with a note that I hit a girl at school. My dad sat me down and gave me a warning. “Andy, if you ever hit a girl again, I will give you the biggest spanking you ever had.” When a six-foot-five-inch, 250-pound man tells you not to do something, you listen. I don’t care how old you are.
 - 2) Being verbally abusive. There are a number of ways this can play out. Yelling and hollering at your wife. Calling her hurtful names. Insulting her. Criticizing her. Cutting her down. **Ephesians 4:29** “No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.”
 - 3) Committing sexual sin. One of the cruellest things you can do to your wife is to be sexually unfaithful. And I’m not just talking cheating. I’m talking about all forms of sexual sin, including pornography. One study found that in 56% of all divorces, one party had an obsessive interest in porn sites. Another study fond that 40% of “sex addicts” lose their spouses. Get your sexuality under control, or it will destroy your marriage.
 - 4) Withholding affection. Women crave two types of affection. A) Physical affection (non-sexual touching): Hugs, kisses, holding hands, gentle touches. B) Verbal affection: Saying “I love you,” telling her how much she means to you, complimenting her, thanking her, etc.
 - 5) Depriving her of sex. Not meeting your wife’s need for romance and sexual fulfillment. **1 Corinthians 7:3-5** “3 A husband should fulfill his marital

duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. 4 A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

- 6) Ignoring your wife’s sexual differences. Men and women are different. Men are microwaves, and women are crock-pots. If you want to have sex when you go to bed, then you need to begin romancing your wife when you wake up in the morning. You must be kind, gentle, sweet, servant-minded, etc. all day long. Otherwise sex will just make your wife feel like a sex-toy rather than a lover.
- 7) Holding on to distasteful habits. **1 Corinthians 13:5** “Love is not rude.” Rudeness is holding on to distasteful habits, even though you know your wife hates them, such as burping and passing gas in public or at the dinner table, or smoking, or dipping, even growing a beard if she hates it. Why would you do that anyway if you are trying to romance your wife? Instead of being attracted to you, she will be repulsed by you.
- 8) Behaving in ways that hurt her. Many husbands continue to do things that they know hurt their wives. For example, your wife has told you that it hurts her when you gawk at other women and look at pornography, yet you persist in that behavior. Or your wife has told you that it hurts her when you make fun of her in public, but you continue to do it. Or she says that it hurts her that you don’t take care of your health, but you don’t change. This is cruelty.
- 9) Holding her to unrealistic expectations. Many men expect their wives to be Martha Stewart in the kitchen, and Scarlett Johansson in the bedroom, and they withhold love and affection when their wives do not measure up. These are impossible expectations. Your wife is not Martha Stewart, and she is not Scarlet Johansson, and you don’t have the money of Bill Gates or the muscles of Dwayne Johnson. Your wife longs to please you; don’t be impossible to please.
- 10) Spending too much time away from home. Even though their wives have expressed deep dissatisfaction, many men continue to work 60 hours at the office, and often leave for business trips, and spend several nights a week hanging with their buddies, and then spend many weekends away hunting and fishing. The wife feels neglected. She wonders, “Why did I marry a man who spends much more time away from me than with me?”
- 11) Acting like a dictator. Many husbands make big decisions without ever consulting their wives. They decide which house to buy, which car to buy, which job to take, where to live, where to go to church, all without consulting their wives, or disregarding her wishes. It is important to remember that marriage is a partnership, not a dictatorship. **Matthew Henry** “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule

over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

V. CONCLUSION

1. I saw a story on Facebook about an elderly couple who had been married for over sixty years. The wife was 83 years old, and she was losing her sight. She was bothered about her makeup. How was she going to put on her makeup each day without the ability to see herself in the mirror? In response, her husband took some lessons with a makeup artist so he could do it for her. And sure enough, as her sight continued to fail, her husband took over the job of putting on her makeup each day. That's a good illustration of what God calls husbands to do in marriage.
2. **Colossians 3:18** “Husbands, love your wives and don’t be bitter toward them.”
3. Today I challenge you to renew your commitment to the Lord, and to being the kind of husband that He has called you to be.