

# (Basics) 50. Responsibilities of Husband and Wife

by Zac Poonen

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*God's plan for an excellent marriage prioritizes God first, followed by the home and then the ministry, with the husband's role being to love his wife as Christ loved the church and the wife's role being to be subject to her husband.*

**Duration:** 13:07

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Matthew 18:21-22, Ephesians 5:22-33

**Topics:** "Marriage", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of building a strong spiritual foundation in our lives. He uses the analogy of a three-story house, with the foundation being God's perfect love for us. The first story represents our personal walk with God, where we strive to keep our conscience clear and listen to the Holy Spirit. The second story focuses on building a strong relationship with our spouse, prioritizing love and unity. The speaker warns against allowing anything to come between the husband and wife, such as money, parents, or children, as it can lead to confusion and destruction in the marriage.

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## Transcript

And we want to continue thinking a little more deeply about God's plan for an excellent marriage. And if you listen carefully, I believe this can change your life. We saw in our last study that God was the person who should be between a husband and wife, and only God for them to be bound together throughout their life on earth, because God is the greatest binding force in the universe.

If anything else comes in between money, parents, job, children, there's going to be confusion. Should you honor your parents? Definitely. Don't let them come between you and your marriage partner.

Should you take care of your children? Yes. You need to sacrifice for your children, do many things for your children. But don't love your children more than you love one another.

That's not God's will. Many parents love their children more than they love each other. They disobey God.

I'm talking about believers. There is no relationship spoken of in the entire Bible as close as the relationship of a husband and wife. You know the example used in Ephesians chapter 5? The husband is the head of the wife in what way? Not like the head of an organization.

Do you know the difference between the head of an organization and the head of a physical body? The head of an organization may not have any interest in the members in that organization, but the head in your physical body has got a very living interest in every part of your physical body, every member. That is the will of God. So the relationship between a husband and wife is pictured in Ephesians chapter 5 as close and as intimate as the relationship between your physical head and the rest of your body.

Can you think of a closer relationship than that? Your physical head and your physical body. That is the closest, most intimate relationship one can think of. Even a father and son are not described in the Bible as head and body.

Mother and daughter are not described like that. No, parents and children are not described like that. It is only a husband and wife.

That is the closeness with which God wants husband and wife to live. So, in other words, you should love one another more than you love your children. If you love your children more, you are destroying your marriage.

If you love your parents more, you are destroying your marriage. If you love your job more, you are destroying your marriage. Even if you love your ministry more, you are destroying your marriage.

When I said you must put the Lord first, don't misunderstand that it means you must put the Lord's work first. No. There is a difference between the Lord and the Lord's work.

Many people don't understand that. There are people who ignore their wives, saying, I'm doing the Lord's work. What's the result? Their marriage gets destroyed, and finally their so-called Lord's work also gets destroyed.

That's not God's will. How should our spiritual life be built? Let me use the picture of a three-story house. If you are building a three-story house, a ground floor, first floor, and a second floor, or a first story, second story, third story, the first thing you build is the foundation.

And the foundation is God's perfect love for us. On that foundation, we must build. There is no other foundation revealed in Jesus Christ.

On that foundation, we first of all build the first story, or the ground floor, whichever way you call it. The first story is our own personal walk with God. That means your relationship with God, where you walk in the light, you keep your conscience clear, and you listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit telling you where you need to cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

That is the first story. And whether you're married or single, that is the first story. You have to build that first.

Once you've built that, or as you're building that, you go to the second story. What is the second story? The second story, if you're married, is your relationship with your wife. So, after we have built a relationship with the Lord, we seek to build a relationship with our wives.

That's the second story. Our home relationship. And, from the wife to the children.

The wife first, or the husband first. And then we come to the third story, which is our ministry. The church.

For example, if you're an elder in the church, you know what it says? One of the qualifications of an elder in a church in 1 Timothy 3 is, he must have a good home. He must be the husband of one wife, and he should have brought up his children properly. Why? In 1 Timothy 3 it says, listen carefully.

If a man cannot control his own house, how will he control the church? So, which comes first? House or church? You know that. It's clear. Your house.

You first control your house, then you'll be able to control the church. If you can't control the house, you can't control the church. So, the ministry comes after your family.

That's God's word. God comes first, then my home, and then God's work. Then I have a base on which to do God's work.

This is where the devil has destroyed so many people. He's made them concentrate on the Lord's work. What is the result? Their children are unconverted, go astray, they fight and quarrel with their wives at home, and they are doing God's ministry.

It's a disgrace. I believe such people should resign from God's ministry and go and sit at home and build a relationship with their wives and their children first. Now, I'm not saying that your wife has to be spiritual before you serve the Lord.

There are many people who have served the Lord, including great men like John Wesley, who had thoroughly carnal and probably even an unconverted wife. But your attitude to your wife, you are in control of. It must be one of perfect love, even if she's the most evil person in the world.

If your attitude to your wife is not one of love, you cannot do God's ministry. Whether you have a good relationship or not, of course, is a two-sided affair, and if there's no cooperation from the other side, you may not have a good relationship. That's another thing.

But from your side, you must always be willing to humble yourself, always be willing to wash your feet. The Bible says, like Jesus loved the church, the husband must love his wife. What should the husband do? Be willing to wash the wife's feet.

In other words, be willing to do dirty jobs for your wife. That's what Jesus did for the church. How many times does Jesus forgive the church? Millions and millions and millions of times.

How many times should a husband forgive his wife? Millions and millions and millions of times. Infinitely. This is what it means to love your wife as Christ loved the church.

If you want a happy marriage, follow the maker's instructions in Ephesians 5, verses 22 to 33. What about wives? In fact, the command to wives comes first, before the command to husbands. If you are a wife, what does God tell you to do? Listen carefully.

Be subject to your husband. Verse 22 of Ephesians 5 and 24, it tells you how to be subject. It's very interesting.

As the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be to their husbands in every single thing. How does the church obey Christ, obey the Lord? Not with argument and strife and reluctantly, but joyfully, in everything. So, unless your husband tells you to do something which is contrary to the word of God, in which case you must obey God and not your husband.

In all other areas, a wife should obey her husband. That is the teaching of the word of God. Now, I want to give a warning here.

The great danger, even in Christian families is, husbands will take a verse like this addressed to the wives and use it as a hammer to hit their wives on the head with, saying, see what the Bible says, you must be subject to me. Now, listen carefully, husbands. The Bible does not say, husbands, get your wives to submit to you.

No. Your job is only to love your wife as Christ loved the church. That's all.

And let me say a word to you, wives. There is no verse in scripture which says, wives, get your husbands to love you as Christ loved the church. But that's how some husbands and wives understand it.

They go to a passage like this, and the husband is reading what the wife should do, instead of reading what he should do, and the wife is reading what the husband should do, instead of reading what she should do. Then there is absolute confusion. Just like in the garden of Eden, Adam began to point the finger at Eve.

God said, let me paraphrase God's words, what's the cause of the problem? And Adam points his finger at his wife and says, she is the cause of the problem. You see, that started in Genesis chapter 3, pointing the finger at the wife and saying, this whole problem started with her. And then indirectly blaming God and saying, this is the wife you gave me.

What can I do? So he doesn't take the blame himself. And then God asked the wife, what's the cause of the problem? She points her finger at the serpent and says, that's the cause of the problem, the devil. The devil caused it.

I mean, it's not my fault. The devil did something. I want to tell you, dear friends, as long as you're blaming each other and blaming the devil, you will just be thrown out of paradise.

That's what happened. God sent them both out of paradise because they were not willing to take the blame. They sinned.

What was Adam's sin? He didn't take his place as the head of the home there. When Eve was eating that fruit, he should have stopped her and said, that's wrong. But he stood there, dumbly.

The first husband was an effeminate husband. He couldn't take his place as the head of his home. And when husbands don't take their place as the head of the home, there's confusion in the home.

When wives don't take their place as the helpers in the home, but start taking the leadership like Eve took in the Garden of Eden, again the devil comes in. There's confusion. So, we need to stop blaming one another.

And say, Lord, if you're a husband, say, Lord, my duty is not to find out what my wife has to do. My duty is to love her as Christ loved the church. And if you're a wife, you need to say, Lord, my duty is not to find out what my husband has to do, but to be subject to him.

If each of you can do what God wants you to do, instead of being a busybody and finding fault with your partner, saying he is not doing what God has told him to do, there can be peace. Otherwise, there will be continued confusion. Why not start taking the blame yourself, humbling yourself from today, and

experience that excellent marriage God wants to give you.

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