

# Husband and Wife - Like Christ and the Church

by Zac Poonen

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*A strong church is built on strong families, and a strong family life is founded on love, respect, and submission.*

**Duration:** 58:04

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:28, Proverbs 14:1, Matthew 8:8-9, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:25, 1 Peter 3:7

**Topics:** "Christian Marriage", "Family Leadership"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of husband-wife relationships in the New Testament, highlighting the need for love, humility, and mutual respect within families. It contrasts the true strength of a church, which lies in strong family units, with the superficial emphasis on numbers and external activities. The message underscores the significance of humility, submission, and building godly homes as foundational aspects of Christian life and leadership.

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## Transcript

If you go to the Old Testament, there is not much or almost nothing written about husband-wife relationships. Because that was not a very important thing. But when you come to the New Testament, there is great importance given to husband-wife relationships.

And I think in most churches, they don't understand this. A lot of people think that a church is strong, if you have a lot of people coming there and a lot of people praising the Lord and they've got a lot of activities. And they have some open air evangelistic activity.

But you don't see that in the Bible. First of all, in the Bible, they could not have large gatherings because they didn't have any building. You could only meet in small groups of 50 in some houses.

So, all the New Testament churches were just 50-60 people meeting in different houses in a city. One of the big advantages of that is that they were like a family. They used to meet in a home, so the family atmosphere was there.

And the important thing was not that they shouted and praised God. Those days, they were so persecuted that they could not shout because the Roman soldiers will come and find out where they are and catch them. In Saudi Arabia, it's like that today.

The churches there cannot shout. If you do that, the police will come and take you all to jail. So, it's like that in China today.

So, Jesus never said a good church is the one that shouts and praises God a lot. He never said a good church is that which has got many thousands of people. He said a good church is that where they love one another.

But Christianity has lost that vision. So many other things have become more important. How loud you shout and praise? Do you fast? Do you speak in tongues? All these things have become important.

And the most important things, like love and humility, are very rarely found today. What is the most important characteristic of a spiritual leader or elder? It's not that they can preach well. I don't think all the elders in the New Testament were great preachers.

But they were very humble people. They did not give others the impression that I'm better than you. That is the mark of a godly man.

He's a humble man. Like Jesus. But we have very few elders and leaders like that.

All over the world, it's very difficult to find. Because other values have become more important. In the same way, the importance of the family is also not stressed in many churches.

The strength of a church is the strength of the families. So if you want to find out how strong a church is, you can't count the number of people on Sunday. That means nothing.

There is no point in counting the number of people on Sunday. How loudly they sing and praise, or how well they sing and praise, or how good their musical instruments are, these count for zero. But what I would like to find out is, how do these husbands and wives live at home? That is the strength of the church.

And even if you don't know that, the devil knows that. And so the devil doesn't care how loudly you shout. He doesn't even care if your numbers increase.

So long as the family life is weak, he knows the church will never be strong. And the family life is a hidden thing. Nobody can see that.

Who knows how you live with your wife? Everybody looks very holy on Sunday morning. When I look at all of you sitting here, you look like the holiest, humblest, loving people on the earth. But is that how you live at home? I don't know.

The bible says, your father who sees in secret, will reward you openly. The strength of my life is not how much I know the bible, or how well I can preach. It is how I behave with my wife at home and my children.

If I don't walk in humility and love and purity at home, I can fool you, but God won't support me. So please remember, all of you families, that you have a major responsibility in making the church strong. You may feel nobody sees you, how you live at home, but God sees you.

And the God who sees in secret, rewards openly. That's something Jesus said, your father who sees in secret, will reward openly. He said it three times in Matthew 6. And he emphasized in that chapter, that the most important thing about the Christian life, is what you do in secret.

the most important thing about the Christian life, is what you do in secret. Your secret life, is the most important part of your life. Look at that building, that building has got a foundation.

But then this will collapse after sometime. But a building like that, can last for hundreds of years. Why? Not because of what you see on the outside.

The strength of that building, is in its foundation. Or we can say, the strength of that building, is in the part of that building, which you cannot see. It's the same with a tree.

Sometimes when there is a storm, in Bangalore, two big trees there on the road side, one falls and the other doesn't fall. Why is that? Both look good big trees. How is it one fell so quickly, and the other is still standing strong? You know the reason.

Because the roots of one were strong, and the roots of the other, were all eaten up. So just like a building, what is the most important part of a tree? That part which you cannot see. Underground.

The strength of a tree, is not in its trunk or its branches. It's in the hidden part. The strength of a building, is in the hidden part.

The strength of your life, is in your heart, which nobody can see, whether it's pure or not. That is the difference between, the true church and the false church. The Bible calls it, Jerusalem and Babylon.

What is the main difference? In Jerusalem, they emphasize, the hidden life. That part which nobody can see. But in Babylon, the emphasis is on what you can see.

They'll talk about an activity, which people can see. If they pray, everybody knows, that they pray. Not like Jesus said, that nobody should know.

If they fast, they'll let everybody know, they are fasting. That is Babylon. If they give money, everybody must know how much they give.

That is how the devil has fooled Christianity, to build Babylon. But true Christianity, if they give money, nobody knows it. If they pray, nobody knows it.

If they fast, nobody knows it. It's the hidden life, that gives them strength, just like a building or a tree. But because most believers, don't have any discernment, if somebody gets up here, and preaches loud and shouts, people think, he is a very spiritual man.

He talks about evangelism, and fasting and praying and all that. People think, he is a spiritual man. How do they think like that? Because 90% of believers, don't have discernment.

But such people can't fool me. I can taste that spirit, when they speak. There is no humility there.

There is no brokenness. It's all very gifted. But it's not the spirit of Christ.

So remember that, don't think that, you who have a family life, your family life is not important. It is more important, for the building of the church. The strength of a church, is in its family.

In the olden days, they used to have wooden pillars, to support, the wooden slats on the roof. These old buildings, that were built 70-80 years ago, they have these wooden pillars, and they paint it every year, to make it look nice. And it looks right round, big strong pillar.

When it's painted, it looks really nice. But then one day, the whole building collapses. What happened? Because inside this painted wood, it was all eaten up with white ants, it was all hollow inside.

As soon as it was painted, inside the wooden pillars, the white ants, ate it up. Little by little, the strength of that wooden pillar, was gone. This is a perfect picture, of many churches.

It's a perfect picture, of many elders. Yeah, I have seen that, even in some of our churches. They have been elders for so long, that everybody, they know that nobody can ever, displace them from their throne.

And then they stop judging themselves. They start judging others. They are only preaching to others now.

The elder in Laodicea, was like that. He was a big man. And the Lord said, you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

He didn't know that. He didn't know that, till the Apostle John, sent a message to him. Because he did not care, for his hidden life.

He did not care about his family life. These are all warnings for us. For myself, I have decided, that I will concentrate, on my hidden life, more than anything else.

Those areas of my life, which even my wife cannot see. That is what I will concentrate on, till the day Jesus comes. I don't care if I lose my voice one day, and I can't preach anymore.

Because preaching is not important for me. That may help other people. But for me, my hidden walk with God, is number one.

My attitude towards money, and my thought life, these are number one. And then second, is my life at home, which nobody can see. If those two things are alright, we can say the foundation is okay.

On top of that, God can build whatever he wants, that's up to him. So I want to say to all of you, Please take my advice, if you want to live a good life, and face the Lord Jesus, when he comes. Watch your thought life, all the time, till the final day.

And all the areas of your life, which other people cannot see, how you behave at home, all the secret things you talk about at home with your wife, and all the secret things you do at home, there must be purity, there must be love. If you don't treat your wife with love and compassion, you are going to get a big surprise when Christ comes again. Everybody in the assembly may have thought you are a wonderful brother.

They will get a big shock when Jesus exposes that you treated your wife like a servant and not a helper. Do you know that when God made Adam, He said in Genesis 2, I will make him a helper. And do you know when Jesus said about the coming of the Holy Spirit in John 14, He said in John 14,16, I will send you a helper.

He said in John 14,16, I will send you a helper. Do you know that the Bible gives the same title to the Holy Spirit as it gives to your wife? He was created to be a helper for Adam. And Jesus took the same word and said, I will send you a helper to help you in the Christian life.

When you see that Almighty God has used the same word for the Holy Spirit as He has used for a wife, you will learn to respect your wife a lot more. The Holy Spirit is not supposed to be my servant. He has come to help me.

He has come to help me live a holy life. He has come to help me speak and serve the Lord. That's why God gave you a wife.

To be a helper, you must treat her as an equal. If you treat your wife as lower than you, like most people in India do, then you are not a Christian. Then you have to say that you have not understood the Bible.

Now you say, well, where in the Bible does it say the woman is equal to the man? I told you, my ministry is to show you things which you have never seen in the Bible. Here is this piece of a jigsaw puzzle I am going to put in the place now. Here is this piece of a jigsaw puzzle I am going to put in the place now.

1 Corinthians 11 Verse 3 How many of you believe that Jesus Christ is equal to the Father? Jesus Christ is equal to the Father. Now we go to verse 3. I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man. Man is the head of a woman.

God is the head of Christ. Are the Father and Christ equal? Yes, you said it was right. But for the sake of redemption, Jesus voluntarily took a place of submission and made the Father the head.

In the same way, during this period on earth, during this period on earth, man and woman are like that. The relationship between man and a woman is exactly the same as the relationship between the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. That is what you see here.

So if the Father and Son are equal, then man and woman are equal. So how should you treat your wife? You must treat your wife like the Father treated Jesus on earth. How did the Father treat Jesus on this earth? Did he say, Go away! Can you imagine the Father telling Jesus like that? How can you say, Go away! You can't do that.

You must treat her with the same respect that the Father treated Jesus. That is scripture. I know the heathen don't do that, but we are supposed to do that as Christians.

That's why God took Eve out of Adam's side. God could have taken a little bone out of his head and made Eve from that. Then it would have meant that Eve must sit on Adam's head.

Or God could have taken a bone out of Adam's feet. So that Adam could always stamp on top of Eve. Why did he take it from the side? So that she would always be by his side.

It's very important that in our homes, we give to the wife the position that God has appointed in scripture. It says in 1 Peter 3 1 Peter 3 and verse 7 You husbands must live in an understanding way with your wife as a weaker vessel because she is woman and give her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life so that your prayers are not hindered. because she is woman and give her honor so that your prayers are not hindered.

Give her honor. How many of you husbands have obeyed that verse? How many of you can stand before God and say I have obeyed 1 Peter 3 verse 7 I have given her honor as an equal heir in the grace of life. An heir means to a throne.

It means I treat her like a queen because I am the king. I will tell you something How many of you husbands want to be a king in your home? I think we all should be kings in our home. I will tell you how to be a king in your home.

I will tell you how to be a king in a very simple way. Make your wife a queen. You will automatically become the king.

Isn't that simple, easy way to become the king? Treat your wife like a queen and you will become the king. That's what it says here. Grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life.

One more picture in Ephesians chapter 5 It says in verse 23 that the husband is the head of the wife and because he is the head he must love his wife as he loves his own body. He must treat his wife like he treats his own body. How do you treat your body? Suppose a mosquito sits on your hand and bites you.

let's not say mosquito. Mosquitoes can give malaria. Let's call an ant that bites you.

A small ant that's not dangerous. What do you do? You watch it. You let it keep on biting your hand.

Immediately you will knock it off because you feel something, a pain in your hand. You know what it means to love your wife like you love your body? That when something is small is hurting your wife you feel it. And you say, I must help my wife to be free from that.

It's a very difficult job to be a Christian husband. It's like Christ loving the church. He washed the feet of the church.

He laid down his life for the church. And the Bible says the husband-wife relationship must be like that. It's very, very difficult.

Very difficult to be a Christian husband. To be a non-Christian husband that's easy. He's got to just sit like a Maharaja with his feet up on the table and say, Bring me my coffee now.

Is the food ready? Are my clothes washed? Have you dressed up the children for the school? And then the Maharaja gets up slowly. Doesn't do anything in the home. Dear brothers and sisters, we have to change from that.

Yeah, your wife may be good at cooking, so she does all the cooking. That's okay. I'm not saying you shouldn't do that.

Each of us has a gift. So there's nothing wrong in letting her exercise her gift. So I'm not saying that if you're not good at cooking, you should go into the kitchen.

I'm not good at cooking, so I don't go into the kitchen and mess up the whole thing. I go there and nobody will eat the food that's cooked in my house. So that's not my gift.

I earn the money and do that part of the family. So each of us may have a different gift, that's okay. But we can respect one another.

So these are the pictures the Lord gives about how a husband should treat his wife. And now that all of your sisters are very excited about all that I've told your husbands, now I have to tell you something. Not me, but God.

What does the Bible say about a woman? See what it says. Ephesians 5.24 As the church is subject to Christ, so the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. This body submits to the head.

It doesn't have a fight with the head. It submits to the head. If the head says lift up your hand, it lifts it up.

It trusts the head. And it says here that that is a relationship that should be between a husband and a wife. Verse 22 Be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord.

Who has told you to do that? God. So there is one person above your husband and that is God. We saw that in 1 Corinthians 11.

It's very important to see that. 1 Corinthians 11 because some wives ask me this question. Does that mean I have to do everything my husband tells me? Supposing he tells me to do something wrong because he is not perfect or he may be carnal or he may not even be converted Okay.

Bible is very clear. It doesn't make any mistake. 1 Corinthians 11.3 says The head of the man the head of the woman is the man.

But the man has also got a head. He is not without a head. It says here that Christ is the head of the man.

So it's like an army. On top there is a general. He is a very senior officer.

Below him is a captain. Then there is a soldier. Here is a general on top.

That's like Christ. Then there is a captain. That's like your husband.

Then the soldier. That's you. So when the captain tells the soldier to do something he does it.

Why? Because when the general tells the captain to do something he does it also. Now if the general tells the captain to do something and the captain doesn't obey he will lose his job. See there was a captain.

You read off in Matthew chapter 8. And there you can see this thing of Christ and the husband and the wife. So see this picture. A general, a captain and soldier.

Okay here is a captain. Matthew 8 verse 8. He is called centurion here. That's like a Roman captain.

He had a hundred soldiers under him. And what does he say? In verse 9. I am a man under authority. That means I have a general on top of me.

I am under his authority. And I have a soldier under my authority. And when I tell the soldier to go he goes, when I tell the soldier to come he comes.

To do this he does it. Why? Because when the general says to the captain go, he goes. And the general says come, he comes.

He says do this, he does it. So this is the order. There is a Christ and the man and the wife.

Okay so supposing your husband tells you to do something. It's like the captain telling the soldier do this. But the soldier knows that the general has said nobody should do that.

Should the soldier obey the captain or not? What do you think? Yes or no? All the husbands are quiet but the wives know the answer. But there the wife should not obey the husband. I'll give you an example.

Supposing a wife has got an unconverted husband. He is still her head. The bible says that.

And supposing he says I want you to bow down to this idol. The husband tells the wife to bow down to this idol. Should she obey her husband? No.

Because the soldier knows that the general has said nobody should bow to idols. You know I was in the military myself. And sometimes my senior officer would tell me do this.

And I knew in my heart that was wrong. Because my conscience he was telling me to do something wrong for his benefit. You know like getting some government property for him.

For his private use. I would say no sir I can't do that. I would respect him.

I have to call him sir. I will stand at attention. And I say I'm sorry sir.

I can't do that. My conscience does not permit me. Now in the military it's a very serious thing to say no sir to an officer.

But I had to say that many times. Because above that officer was God. And I knew God did not permit me to do that.

So sometimes the officer would take me in front of the commanding officer. Say this officer is not obeying my orders. So I would stand there before the commanding officer and say Sir I'm a Christian and I can't do that.

If they want they can lock me up in jail. That's ok. But God was on top of everything for me.

So to wives I would say your husband tells you to do something which you know in your conscience is wrong because Jesus Christ has told you you must not do that. Then you know that above your husband there is another head that is Christ. So it's not blind obedience.

But in other things the Bible says obey your husband. There you can be wise. And a wise woman it says in Proverbs 14 can build her house.

Proverbs 14 and verse 1 the wise woman builds her house. Why doesn't it say the wise man builds his house? Do you know that the most important person in a house is actually the wife? I have learned that through many years. If you have a good wife your house will be built.

If you don't have a good wife and even if you are a good man it's very difficult to build a house. Shall I tell you why? Do you know that in Christianity the most important thing is humility? I've always said there are three secrets for the Christian life. Number one humility.

Number two humility. Number three you know it humility. You learned the three secrets means you know how to live the Christian life.

That is why whenever I look at any brother I look for humility. I don't care if he can speak well or if he looks very smart these things mean nothing to me. That is what God looks for.

That is what God was so happy with when he saw Jesus. That was the first man who walked on earth for 30 years without any pride. He never preached, he never did any causing out demons for 30 years.

But what did he do which nobody else did for 30 years? He walked in humility for 30 years and the father said, I am delighted with this. I tell you, you walk like that the father will be delighted with you. He will be delighted more with you than a lot of people who stand in the pulpit because he looks for humility.

You know the devil became the devil through the spirit of pride and along with pride was rebellion. I will lift up my throne above God Who are you to talk to God like that? And when he talked to God like that he became the devil. Shall I tell you wives how to become like the devil? You start talking like that.

Who are you to tell me to do anything? You know who was the first person who said that? Lucifer. You know what happened to him? He became the devil. The spirit of rebellion.

Jesus came. How did Jesus bring salvation? The opposite of this spirit of rebellion is the spirit of submission. Submission to God is very easy.

If I ask you sisters to submit to God any day you are ready to do that. But do you know what Jesus had to do? He had to submit to Joseph and Mary. That was so difficult for 30 years.

He was perfect. Joseph was imperfect. Mary was imperfect.

Joseph was a sinner. An old covenant sinner. Mary was an old covenant sinner.

Just like all families they fought with each other. Just like all families they fought with each other. Do you believe that? Do you believe that Joseph and Mary fought with each other? I am not a Roman Catholic.

I believe Joseph and Mary fought with each other. I have seen new covenant families fighting with each other. What about the old covenant families? They were not perfect.

They were not perfect. But God told Jesus submit to them. Don't question whether they are perfect or not.

Just submit. Not one or two days. 30 years.

How many of you sisters want to follow Jesus? How many of you sisters want to follow Jesus? To submit to an imperfect husband for 30 years? Do you see how difficult it was for Jesus? Do you find it difficult even for one week? That's a Christian home. Don't say you are not perfect. I am not perfect.

Jesus didn't say to Joseph and Mary you are not perfect. Why should I listen to you? I am spiritual. You are not spiritual.

Jesus could have said all that. But he didn't do it. He submitted.

Dear sisters, that's how Jesus brought salvation by the spirit of submission. The spirit of submission. Who is the one who brings the spirit of submission into a home? Not the husband.

He has to submit to Christ, but that is invisible. But the wife is the one who brings the spirit of submission into the home. Not the man.

Not the man. The Bible doesn't say the husband should be submissive to the wife, but the wife should be submissive to the husband. So who is the one who brings the spirit of submission into the home? The woman.

And what spirit is that? That is the spirit of Jesus Christ. So who can bring the spirit of Christ into a home? Not the husband. But the wife.

That's why it says the wise woman builds her home. Do you understand that? And when your children see that spirit of submission, they will get it themselves. And then they will submit also.

So when you see your children talking like this, when your children talk to you like this, who are you to talk to me like that? You ask yourself whether they heard you speak like that to your husband and they learnt it from you. Don't blame them. You got the chicken pox first and they got it from you.

Why do you blame them? So many times we blame our children for what they learnt from us. We have to repent. What a responsibility we have as parents.

Repent. And when our spiritual relationship is alright, then our physical sexual relationship is also important. Now many people think the physical sexual relationship is bad.

It's bad outside marriage. Before sin came into the world, when God created man and woman, he told both of them in Genesis 1.28, you must be fruitful. You must have children before sin came into the world.

How were they supposed to have children? God was telling Adam and Eve you must have a sexual relationship and enjoy it and have children. That is God's command. There is nothing wrong in it.

It's wrong outside of marriage. Even to think about it outside of marriage with some other girl, that's wrong. Even to look at a picture of another woman to lust after it is wrong.

But inside marriage, sex is holy and pure. Do you know that just like you pray before you eat your food, just like you pray before you eat your food, you can pray before you have sex with each other. Because Jesus can be there.

Because Jesus can bless that. Some people say, how can we pray about that? That's because you got the idea from non-Christian sources or from the cinema. There are certain desires God has placed in the body to eat food, to sleep, and to have a sexual relationship in marriage.

All the three are good, needed for our body. And for all three, we can pray. You can pray before you eat your food, you can pray before you go to sleep, and you can pray before you have a sexual relationship.

But that's not the main thing in marriage. The main thing is your spiritual relationship. That's why I spoke about that.

So I hope all of you have learned something today. And I pray that our churches will become strong because our homes are strong. That our homes will not be like all the heathen homes, but godly homes where Jesus Christ is Lord, where we bring up our children to fear God.

Let's pray. The Lord wants to lift up our marriages to a much higher level than it is right now. You may feel that you are so weak, but the power of His Holy Spirit can lift you to a height that you cannot even dream of right now.

Will you believe the Lord today that your marriage which looks so weak will become strong? If you don't believe, the Lord can do nothing for you. But if you believe, He will lift your marriage to a much higher level than you have ever experienced. He will bring peace into your marriage.

And He will bring love and victory. Thank you, Father. Pray that it will be so in our life.

Your name will be glorified. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: [https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/9C9Tf\\_K89YI.mp4](https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/9C9Tf_K89YI.mp4)

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