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## **The Drama of Marriage — The Duties**

### **Ephesians 5:22-33**

**PowerPoint Presentation: None**

**Keywords: Marriage, Husband, Wife, Duties, Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:7**

**SermonAudio blurb:** The Bible clearly establishes the roles of both the husband and wife. These roles transcend culture and therefore a Christian marriage is one that resists the pressures to conform to the cultural norms in whatever setting that is found. In this message we move from the roles of headship and helper to the specific duties found in those roles.

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. I have established the basis and background of marriage.
  - 1. We know that the bible tells us that marriage is a creation of God and therefore it is defined by Him alone.
  - 2. We know that the bible tells us that the husband and wife have unique orientations to this creation but that they are designed to complement each other.
  - 3. And finally we learned that because of sin everything is hard and broken and twisted. Only in Jesus Christ can that all-encompassing sin issue be resolved.
    - a. We must battle against godlessness.
    - b. We must realize that the great problem in our marriage is not our spouse but sin itself.
  - 4. Prior to my trip to Serbia we considered the commands attached to this institution marriage
    - a. Most important I showed that the marriage relationship is defined by certain principles.
    - b. These, if understood and embraced will help guide both the husband and wife in their marriage. They keep you from straying too far one way or another.
    - c. For the marriage that finds itself way off center that sermon helps bring you to a center point where you can repent, and begin from that point forward, to live a different way for a different reason with your spouse. All by the Holy Spirit's help.

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- B. Today I want to reconsider Ephesians 5 along with another passage in 1 Peter 3 to think not in principles but in duties.
1. Duty is often not a popular term today.
    - a. I remember using it once with a person in the church and the person's reaction was that if I did something out of duty it was not proper or spiritual.
    - b. You should "want to do something rather than doing it because it is your duty."
    - c. The idea followed on the sense of if we are doing things in a whole-hearted way that duty would only restrict that. Often it is framed in some sort of drudgery or legalism.
  2. Notice though what is said by our Lord in various places:
    - a. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)
    - b. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (John 14:15)
    - c. And He said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." "This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-43).
  3. There is no disconnect in the mind of our Lord, much less anywhere else in the bible, where obedience and duty contradict or restrict love.
  4. In fact John 14 makes the connection clear. Truly loving Christ means you keep His commands. There is no biblical idea of a life of consistent command-breaking and yet still loving Jesus Christ.
  5. But notice also that the one follows on the other.
    - a. If you claim to be a disciple (a follower or lover of Jesus Christ) then you will accept the instruction of obedience to Him. If you love Christ... then ... you will keep His commandments.
    - b. These things flow from a heart that has been changed and made anew of the Holy Spirit bringing you into new life in Jesus Christ.

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6. As a Christian we have new life in Christ Jesus. Paul is assuming that because of what he taught already in Ephesians 2:1-10.
  - a. Therefore we ought not make it our habit to walk in a way contrary to Christ and in conformance to this fallen age.
  - b. We can take up our various duties with reluctance, fear, or even bitterness. Or we can take them up in joy and a willing spirit.
  - c. If the former, we will constantly fight our emotions and be like children who lack the self-discipline and begin to pout or cry because they don't want to embrace the duty of obeying.
  - d. If the latter, we will train our emotions to be in submission to the Word of God. We will grasp that God is the one who gave us these duties so therefore they are good and right for us.
7. As we discipline ourselves to these duties they do not destroy the emotive quality of doing them; rather they help us in doing them quickly and willingly, with little hesitation or internal battle. And this is very important when the spouse makes it hard for us to do our duties.
8. Douglas Wilson points out regarding duties this important observation:

“But the Bible defines love as a whole-hearted keeping of God’s commandments. The greatest act of love was certainly the death of Christ for His people, and that act of love was not offered on an emotional high. It was a bitter grief for Christ to drink the cup of God’s wrath, but that grief does not take away from His love for us; rather, it adds to it.” (*Reforming Marriage*, 43)

Much of what I teach today and next week are from his thoughts in this simple but important book.

- C. As we begin to consider the duties keep in mind that they flow from the roles we have spent several weeks developing. If you have not heard those sermons you need to for this one to make sense.
  1. The husband’s role is to lead and direct and oversee his marriage. As the head all things ultimately are his responsibility.
  2. The wife’s role is to help the husband as he works out his vision and goals in light of God’s command to bring creation under dominion.
  3. And these roles require duties.

## **II. The Duties of The Husband.**

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- A. The most important duty of a Christian husband is that he is to model Jesus Christ to his wife (Ephesians 5:25).
  - 1. Fail here and everything else falls apart. Grow and succeed here and everything else tends to come together.
  - 2. Some key thoughts need to be made to this duty:
    - a. Keep in mind that this is your first duty men.
      - (1) That means you need to give much thought to this early on in your relationship, or start thinking about it right now if you haven't done so.
      - (2) Remember that this duty flows out of a reality (an indicative) about you as a husband. Whether you know it or not, like it or not, you constantly speak of Christ to your wife in word and deed.
      - (3) A husband who abandons his wife in whatever way merely preaches to his wife that Christ is one who abandons His church.
    - b. You must learn to be truthful in how you model Christ therefore.
      - (1) If you are lazy you portray a lazy Jesus toward His church.
      - (2) If you are deceitful you tell her that she cannot trust her Lord.
      - (3) Realize that you cannot escape this duty. Even if you remain silent you are speaking daily to your wife of Christ.
      - (4) This means you must know Jesus Christ well. To have a passing understanding of the person and work of Jesus will not work.
- B. A second duty is to be a husbandman to his wife (23).
  - 1. The Old Testament at times portrays God's relationship to Israel as that of a husband.
    - a. Isaiah 54:5, "for your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name."
    - b. Jeremiah 31: 32, "It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt."

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,' declares the LORD.”

- c. This is what is picked back up in Ephesians 5:23.
2. This is why Paul uses certain terms in chapter 5 such as vs 29.
  - a. You nourish your own body and you must nourish your wife.
    - (1) The term used means in its simplest sense to feed your body. But it carries also the idea of the raising a child from birth to maturity.
    - (2) This moves it into the both the physical and more emotional/mental arena. It is not enough to provide nourishing food to the child, you seek to create a godly environment for that child to flourish.
  - b. To cherish means to keep warm. Again it is more than that though as it speaks of a tender care and comfort.
    - (1) Paul uses this in 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7 to describe his own ministry toward that church. He writes, “. . . nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.”
    - (2) So this is more than keeping a warm house but again goes to both the body and soul. A husband ought to be a source of true comfort and care for his wife.
  - c. Take these together and it describes what being a husband truly is. Seeking to create a relationship and household where she can flourish and grow. That is a home where she finds herself truly safe.
  - d. Only a foolish or shortsighted husband could think that he need not take care in this area and still expect his wife to flourish.
  - e. Frankly, when I see a Christian wife who does not flourish I look to the husband first. More often than not, he is enabling and helping her to struggle through his own failure to nourish and cherish her.
  - f. Some points of application:

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- (1) How do you view your wife? As a treasure? As a good gift? Or is she a hindrance to your desires and goals?
- (2) Do you recognize that there is no other man on the earth who exists to bring your wife this nourishment and care? You must not seek to extricate yourself from that calling.
- (3) Though your wife is responsible to grow in her faith and knowledge of her Lord, you are responsible to create an environment in which she can readily do so.
- (4) Wilson uses the imagery of a garden. One that is walled and accessible only by you. She is the plants of the garden and your job is to provide all that she needs to grow well. This includes the removal of weeds and pests that would hinder her.
- (5) It also means that you need to work very hard about how you manage your time. This means how you plan out your “alone time” or how you spend time with friends rather than your wife. Busyness in work schedules, pursuits of your own needs all communicate much to your wife.
- (6) There is nothing funny about the hollow joke of being a fishing widow or hunting or golfing or fill in the blank.
- (7) You need to provide her the finances needed to accomplish her duties.
  - (a) There is an interesting passage in Exodus 21:10-11 that speaks to the duties of a husband to his first wife if he takes a second. If he does so he must make sure that he still must provide her food, clothing and marital rights.
  - (b) The New Testament picks this up in I Timothy 5: 8, “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
  - (c) When your wife goes in worn out clothes while you buy the latest and nicest don’t fool yourself anymore.
  - (d) Don’t give her a ridiculous food budget that is a mockery of your commitment to her and her

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responsibilities to feed your household and be rich in helping those in need.

- C. A third duty is to be sacrificial (25).
1. Note the extent of that sacrificial attitude, “. . . as Christ . . . .”
  2. This tightly connects to the first two duties because in sacrificing we model the love of Christ for His Church. But that love for the Church did not end only with His death on the Cross, but then in the way He nourishes and cherishes His Church so as to bring her to her full glory.
  3. This is one duty that can get all twisted out of shape by both husband and wife..
    - a. To sacrifice does not mean you lay down your own will or purposes.
      - (1) Christ certainly didn't do so.
      - (2) Note the “that” in the beginning of vs 26. It speaks of purpose.
      - (3) This great sacrifice of redeeming His church from her enslavement to sin and death was for the purpose of giving to Himself a glorious bride.
      - (4) In other words He did not sacrifice His life just to do so. And the same is true for you God willing.
    - b. A husband who thinks that sacrificing for the wife is to always do what she wishes fails to understand his responsibility to lead that home and her role to help him do so.
    - c. But a wise husband understands that as he considers decisions he will make he also keeps foremost how it is good for his household, especially his wife. This is the basis of sacrificing. He subsumes his personal desires for the well-being of the household.
- D. A fourth duty is to wash her in the Word (26).
1. Now this can be done in a multitude of ways and you need a bit of wisdom to help you in this.
  2. For some marriages it is good to have a time where you together read scripture and sound books and discuss them. For others this doesn't work as well due to temperaments or simply time.

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3. But frankly this is not what is the point, though I would never discourage a couple from doing this. I wish I had developed this habit early in my marriage. Instead we developed a different set of habits.
  4. More important though is that the whole tenor of your household, your speech, your repentance and confession is borne out of the Word of God. Husbands, you create an atmosphere that permeates your home one way or another.
  5. As you interact with your wife in the multitude of opportunities a marriage naturally produces it should be from a biblical worldview that is rich in sound theology.
    - a. This gives you a simple purpose as a single man to grow in. Become that man of the Word that your future wife needs.
    - b. It gives a father and mother a key purpose in your parenting, especially boys. Make sure you teach them the biblical “why” of what they should or should not do or think. Make them read sound books. Have theological discussions with them.
- E. Going back to 5:29 I see a fifth duty as well. It is to protect your wife.
1. Physically:
    - a. To not willingly let harm come to her as best you can. You take the hit. You take the risk. You stand in the way.
    - b. There is a sad but funny video on youtube where a guy jumps out of the way of a foul ball and let’s his girlfriend take the hit. Guys don’t be that guy.
    - c. This means you need to learn a bit of self-defense. You need to think about not putting your wife in undo harm.
    - d. To this day I still walk my daughters out to their car.
  2. Emotionally/mentally:
    - a. Push your wife to grow and expand her thinking theologically.
    - b. If you think that she is somehow exempt from the constant pressure to be conformed to the thinking of this age you need to learn your own sound theology first.
    - c. Watch your wife and learn how she learns best and provide that. Encourage her to ever be growing. It is easy as children come for her to flounder and simply coast due to busyness.

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3.      Relationally:
    - a.      Help encourage her to pursue godly relationships for her soul.
    - b.      Resist relationships that are ungodly and unhelpful to her. She should not be with the gossips and the busybodies.
    - c.      When we apply this missionally it means that her relationships with unbelievers have a purpose beyond just hanging out.
    - d.      When our women's ministry has an event you should be noting it and making sure your wife is part of it.
    - e.      As she is growing in the Lord press her to develop discipling relationships.
  4.      Part of this protection comes by being biblically jealous.
    - a.      In Exodus 34:14 God is described as a jealous God who will not tolerate competing gods.
    - b.      In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul describes himself as the husband of the Corinthian church and that he is jealous of them as false teachers are seeking to encroach upon the church.
    - c.      Husbands, you need to have that jealousy. You fight for the well-being of your homes before the Lord. You be jealous for godly, biblical thinking in your wife's mind. You reject any attempts by this world to define what is good and right for your marriage.
    - d.      In ways you need to echo Joshua's call to Israel, "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)
  5.      All of this is assuming that you are a man intimately involved and engaged in her life.
- F.      A sixth duty is to meet her sexual needs.
1.      Note 1 Corinthians 7:3-4.
  2.      Interesting passage as it is a key area where the wife has authority over her husband.
  3.      This is not merely to the sexual acts but to all things related to it. It means you seek to be attractive to her.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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- a. You honor her in how you dress and maintain yourself.
  - b. How you speak to her and care for you factors into this. A loudmouthed man or a whiney needy man is not a good thing to pursue.
4. It shows also how the sexual union is a two-way street where each is offering himself to the other as they would desire. It is not a relationship of dominance. Nor is it a relationship defined by this age.
- G. Finally, the duty of every husband is to understand who your wife is.
1. 1 Peter 3:7
  2. You need to understand the theology of everything I have taught you over these last several weeks about how God has formed both the man and woman.
  3. She was designed as a weaker vessel. Notice that this is a fact, not something that she is to become.
  4. Nor does it make her inferior any more than a fine china cup is inferior to a tin cup because it breaks easily. Rather it is something protected, cared for and cherished.
  5. She is not like the guys. She is unique and she is your fit helper and companion. You need to learn how to live with her uniquely.
  6. Along with this, you grant her the honor of being a full-recipient of God's grace. Remember that this marriage is temporary. Show her the proper honor.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. I have given every husband here a lot to think about.
- B. For those men who are thinking about marriage these are things you need to get straightened out in your private life now.
- C. I cannot promise that if you do these duties that your marriage will turn out perfect and that it will be a joy.
  1. I can tell you that you will honor your Lord and point your wife to her perfect Savior as you learn to embrace your duties.
  2. And I can tell you that as you develop friends with those who do not love Jesus Christ you will have a natural platform to speak of your hope that is beyond this age.

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### **Community Group Questions**

- **First of all remind wives that as discussion takes place that next week we will consider her duties. Grace must prevail.**
- **How well did the men know about these various duties prior to the sermon? What was the reasons they knew them well or not well?**
- **How does having relationships with other husbands help or hinder them as godly husbands to their own wives?**
- **What can this church and the pulpit do to strengthen the men as husbands?**