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The Drama of Marriage — The Duties, Pt 2

Ephesians 5:22-33

PowerPoint Presentation: None

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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 consider some final duties of the husband and then we turn our attention to the wife's.

I. Introduction.

- A. Last week we moved into the application stage of this series on marriage based out of Ephesians 5.
- B. God has not left us without a witness regarding this institution.
 - 1. We have established a sound theology of marriage. Very important that you listen to those if you haven't. [Comment on how too often sermons fail to establish the theological grounds for application and action.]
 - 2. We have heard the commands and principles related to marriage.
 - 3. And we began to consider the duties connected to those commands last week, specifically of the husband.
 - 4. Today we will spend the bulk of our time on the duties of the wife.
- C. First, a brief addendum of duties for the husband that I overlooked.
 - 1. At the head of the household the husband is commanded to love his wife just as Christ loves His Church. This alone brings many duties to the forefront for each husband.
 - a. As you consider the duties given last week you will find that most of them flowed from the reality of this headship and this love.
 - b. Obviously the greatest challenge is to learn to preach Christ to your wife in a faithful manner.
 - 2. Today I want to give two final duties that I think are important for us to hear and think on, especially in the culture we live in.
 - 3. The first duty of a husband today is to be content with your wife.
 - a. Exodus 20:17.

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- (1) “desire, take pleasure in.”
- (2) Note how it extends really beyond just the wife to all things owned by those around you.
- b. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, moved that up to a whole different level in Matthew 5:28 by showing what is really going on.
- c. Proverbs 5:15-23 is helpful here because it is not spoken of in the negative but the positive.
 - (1) One who walks in faith before God is not merely known for what he or she does not do, but also for what he does. Let us be known for doing good works, not merely rejecting evil works.
 - (2) The passage is not difficult to understand. If you marry then it is to your wife alone to whom you direct your care, concerns and delights.
 - (3) There are applications to this then:
 - (a) Reject comparisons that create bitterness, discontentment, or a wandering mind.
 - i) Exception being helping your wife learn to be a wife.
 - ii) In a heavily sexualized world today this becomes huge. The wife is battling, often without knowing it, images that are impossible, and often inappropriate to copy.
 - (b) Remember that she is your helper and your companion. She is not your consort or a plaything.
 - (c) One of the easiest ways that this is accomplished is by diligently working in the other areas I referenced last week.
4. A second duty is to approve and reject commitments.
 - a. This comes by application of Numbers 30.
 - b. Oaths are something to be taken very seriously.
 - (1) Note vs 1, the man must keep his oath.
 - (2) Note then the difference with the woman starting in vs 3.

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- (a) A father can over-rule it.
 - (b) Then at marriage the husband can over-rule the father.
 - (c) Incredible authority and responsibility is present in this.
- (3) The image presented here is not some apathetic, disinterested and disconnected husband who is unaware of what is happening in his home.
- (4) Take note that it matters not if the husband/father speaks or doesn't. Because he is head of the home it is actually his decision one way or another.
- (5) No husband has the ability to say that it wasn't his responsibility.
- (a) So mom and dad, raise up boys who don't make excuses. Have nothing to do with excuses that reflect an unwillingness to take responsibility.
 - (b) When I hear a parent shrug and say, "What can I do?" I know that there is a headship problem not a behavioral one in the home.
 - (c) When I ask a husband if his wife is going to attend some event, or the wisdom of taking part in some activity and he merely looks at me with blank eyes, again I know where the problem lies.
- (6) There is also application here for dating/marriage. It is the basis for how I handled my household in those matters. If this is something you are interested in then I recommend *Her Hand in Marriage*.
- c. The point here is not small nor is it simple. Husbands need to become engaged in the goings on of the home.
- (1) You should be asking your wife what plans she has. What is she doing.
 - (2) When announcements at the church are for the women, you should be listening, asking yourself if this might be good for your wife or daughters.

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- d. Note that this is not some micro-managing attitude but one of care and oversight.
- D. Let me transition to the wife by ending this introduction with something I learned years ago in a class on biblical worship.
1. Family worship is not emphasized in the scripture and often becomes an excuse to not walk in worship through the day.
 2. Family worship is working out the roles that are divinely ordained for us to live out before God and man. This is much more subtle and larger than devotions or bible reading.
 3. We are a paedocentric culture. We resist maturation and aging. We refuse to grow up. And in the family the child is the focal point.
 4. In contrast, the Old Testament pattern is the patriarchal structure.
 - a. This is the reality found in the narratives and is often wrong and abusive.
 - b. Example being Abraham, who with no guilt, passes off Sarah as his sister twice and gives her away.
 5. The proper view is a patricentric ideal.
 - a. Instead of the focus flowing toward the child, or toward the head of the household, it flows the other way around.
 - b. The head of the household's focus upon the well-being of the others. While all those in the household look to the father/husband as the source of the welfare and security.
 - c. The biblical/God-honoring husband does not look to the family for his well-being, it is the exact opposite.
 - d. The man is to create an atmosphere in his household where he becomes the model of how one is to live. It is one where he is inviting his children to walk with him to learn how one matures.
- E. A third duty is to recognize and embrace consequences to your headship without complaint.
1. When we talk about the duties of the Christian wife, this is not a time for the husband to relax.
 2. For the marriage there are not two buckets, one filled for the husband to do and the other for the wife. Husbands you are responsible for both buckets.

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3. But this is not done through force or anger, but through love, nourishment and cherishing. It is a task of creating a fertile ground for her to grow.
4. This is something that can be hard in our culture. It is popular to complain about the wife and talk about how she hinders your. Terms like “ball and chain” are products of this age and not fitting for a man redeemed by Christ.
5. Husband, consider your wife. How are you creating in her an environment in which she can readily and joyfully fulfill her calling and duties before the Lord?
6. Recognize that the condition of your household ultimately reflects your leadership.
 - a. Some of you have wives who make it easy to lead and others do not. But for every husband there is no place for excuses. You are called to own all that occurs in the home.
 - b. For the single man this is something for you to consider. If you are given to excuse making now you are not ready to take up the role of the head of a home.
7. A key application to this is in the area of decision-making.
 - a. Example: you recognize that your wife has a better understanding of money. As a result you have a decision to make and you seek her advice on it. You then accept that advice and it comes back to bite you. What do you do?
 - b. You take full responsibility for it. It was actually your decision not hers.
 - c. You learn to do that and you will create a good environment for your wife to grow.
8. A final duty is that you must resist the temptation to be embittered toward your wife (Colossians 3:19).
 - a. Your wife will fail. She will fight, resist and complain at some point or points in your marriage. She will not live up to your expectations or hopes and it doesn't matter.
 - b. You cannot allow bitterness to enter into your heart. And if it does you must ruthlessly root it out.
 - c. The reason goes back to who you are reflecting— Jesus Christ.

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- d. But in that reality also is found the antidote to bitterness.
 - (1) Allow your wife's failings to point you back to the supreme and infinite love of Christ toward you.
 - (2) Consider the many ways that you, as part of His bride, fail Him each day. Give Him thanks that in this situation He has given you a glimpse into His great love for His Church.
 - (3) Turn these moments away from your wife's shortcomings and turn them into prayer and confession on your own sin. Then, and only then, intercede for your wife.

F. Now we turn to the wife.

II. The Duties of The Wife.

- A. The first duty is to respect her husband (5:22, 33).
 - 1. Just as the fuel that builds up the wife is Christlike love, so too is respect to the husband.
 - 2. This goes back to the uniqueness of orientation in both parties and this is why our culture is working so hard to destroy any idea that male and female are intrinsically unique and different by design.
 - 3. It is argued by some and I agree that these two commands, love your wife and respect your husband, are given because they are inherent weaknesses in both parties.
 - a. Husbands often make the mistake in thinking they are loving their wife by not making trouble for her.
 - (1) But in reality it is more that they should make time for her.
 - (2) At the same time husbands make the mistake that because they respect their wife in her efforts and skills (think about how a man may brag on his wife in one way or another) that they are loving her. They aren't, they are respecting her.
 - b. For the wife the opposite is often true. They will love their husband in so many ways and because that is their own desire they will think that they are doing well.
 - (1) Think on how wives might get together and with their tongues disrespect their husbands with great ease.

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- (2) And yet they will then go back home to feed him, clothe him and such.
 4. Men are built by God to be respected and wives are to give that respect.
 - a. Twice it is commanded. And respect is built into the very fabric of submission as well.
 - b. This is not something that is vague either. It is built into the other commands given to her.
 - (1) Just as a husband is not to love his wife in some what defined by her or himself. Rather it is defined in terms such as nourishing and cherishing her, protecting her, providing for her and such.
 - (2) So too for the wife. You respect your husband when you submit to him and when you take up your call to help him.
 - (3) In addition it comes as you acknowledge his efforts to meet the needs of the home. In his provision and care. You should look for ways to praise him or thank him.
 5. Notice also that this command and duty is given in the positive rather than the negative.
 - a. It is common and easy for a wife to claim that she is *not* being disrespectful but that is not the issue.
 - b. The question to be asked and answered is, in what way is she showing respect to her husband? And that usually takes the conversation in a completely different direction.
 6. Finally, because this is a key duty, it means a woman should be very careful to whom she marries.
 - a. If you cannot easily respect him now it will only be worse in marriage and there is no escape.
 - b. Apart from a strong, abiding faith in Jesus Christ this is probably the key thing you should consider in a relationship. It is what I asked my daughters, “Can you follow him?”
- B. A second duty is to meet his sexual needs.
1. Note 1 Corinthians 7:3-4.
 2. Just as it is the call for a husband to meet his wife’s needs so too is it yours.

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3. This again speaks to the reality that you are not in authority over your body anymore than your husband is over his.
 4. The imagery given here is mutual care and mutual love as you offer yourself to the other.
 5. Realize that for both this is a command for protection. A foolish wife does not think in this way and sets her husband up to make excuses to give into temptations.
- C. A third duty is as the Lord allows, bear children.
1. The command in Genesis 2 to be fruitful and multiply can only occur if you bear children as the Lord allows.
 2. This should be embraced with joy and a willing spirit.
 3. I might add the opposite that fruitfulness of the womb is not a cause of boasting but a reason for joy and thanksgiving.
 - a. The number of children you bear is not a badge of honor in itself.
 - b. Example is how one man wanted me to publically praise wives who became pregnant.... I said no.
 4. This also means that you should not complain when you are weary at the end of a day of caring for your children. It is a hard work but a good and right work that you do.
- D. A fourth duty is to develop a spirit of gentleness.
1. 1 Peter 3:1-5.
 2. The term for “gentle” speaks of bringing your strength under control.
 - a. Has no idea of being helpless or a wimp.
 - b. Rather it is a heart that has been reigned in under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is a spirit that is not fighting the will of the Lord in regard to your calling as a wife.
 3. This is precious in the sight of God and therefore it is something you should delight in pursuing.
 4. It is also the reason that a Christian wife ought to grow in loveliness as she grows older.
 - a. A wise woman is putting on with greater consistency this spirit of true beauty.

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- b. The bible is blunt here, “As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.” (Proverbs 11:22) Or to put it a different way, “The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.” (Proverbs 14:1)

III. Conclusion.

- A. When we remember the picture that the Christian marriage is to portray we then begin to take seriously our roles and responsibilities.
- B. We need to pray for our spouses. We need to model to our children what a marriage ought to be.
- C. And in doing so we push back in rebellion against the powers of this age who seek to present a false, twisted image.

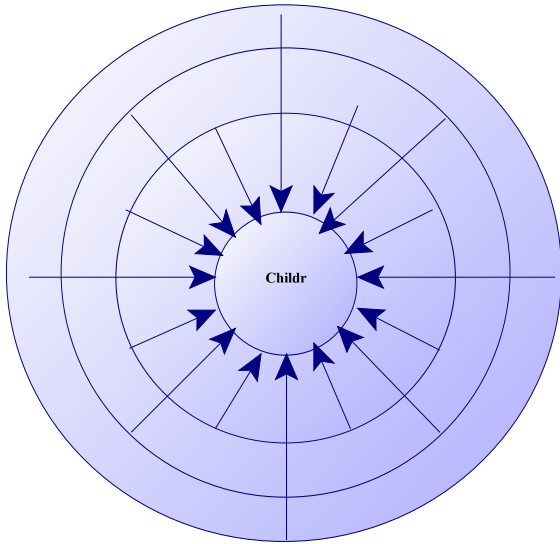
Community Group Questions

- **Since there was no meeting last Sunday, what is standing out for each of you as a result of these sermons on duties?**
- **How well did the men and women 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 or wives help or hinder them as godly husbands to their own wives?**
- **What can this church and the pulpit do to strengthen both the men and women?**

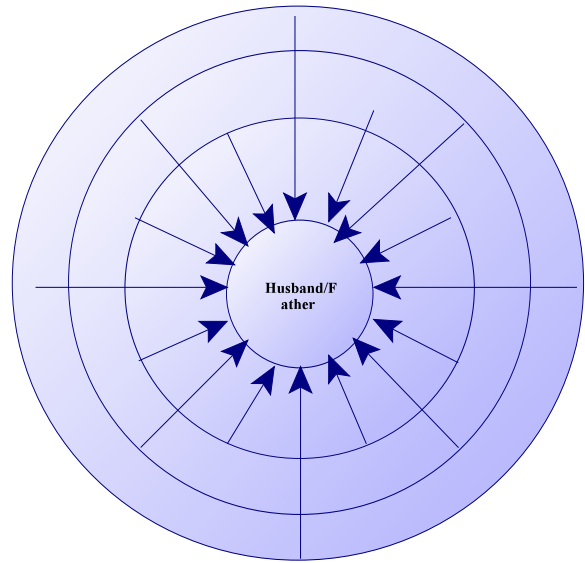
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The Paedocentric Reality of Modern Culture



The Patriarchal Reality of Ancient Israel



The Patricentric Ideal of Ancient Israel

