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The Drama of Marriage — The Duties, Pt 3

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. I showed you some graphics that I want to bring up again because they are so important and helpful in understanding what a God-honoring marriage is going to look like.
 - 1. Paedocentric — when the focus and decisions center upon the children and what makes or keeps them happy.
 - 2. Patriarchal — when the focus and decisions center upon the husband/father and what makes or keeps him happy.
 - a. Much abuse can rise up out of this thinking.
 - (1) Vision Forum.
 - (2) Bill Gothard.
 - b. When you read on sites such as these you will find much helpful material. But what is too often lost is how these are practically worked out resulting in great evil.
 - c. This is why I am spending so much time on the role of the husband. If you wish to cherry pick key aspects of the husband's role and authority from the bible you can quickly become twisted in your understanding.
 - 3. Patricentric — where the husband/father seeks the physical and spiritual well-being of the household. He takes on the responsibility to make sure they are properly and fully cared for in every way.
 - 4. Illustration:

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- a. Picture the husband/father as the frame of a house.
 - (1) He creates the boundaries that define the household. There is a clear distinction between what is in the house and out of the house.
 - (2) He supports the roof that gives protection from the outside, the result is that the family is safe. They can grow and mature.
 - (3) The man also has two faces. One is toward the outside and is designed first and foremost as protection. But the one inside is designed for warmth and living.
 - (4) Both sides are present at the same time. The wise man learns how to have both aspects exist together. Though it is common that only one side or the other be primary.
 - (5) To only be like the exterior or only like the interior will always bring problems. But the worst is the man who has the walls switched around. He is weak toward the world and hard toward his home.
 - (6) But the wise man sees that his role is to provide love, care, instruction and wisdom to his household. This always starts with the wife.

C. Now we turn to the wife.

II. The Duties of The Wife.

- A. The first duty is to respect her husband (5:33 1 Peter 3:2).
 1. Just as the fuel that builds up the wife is Christlike love, so too is respect to the husband. This cannot be understated.
 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, by staying out of the way.

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- (1) But in reality it is more that they should make time for her. They should be involved in her life but in a manner consistent with a loving leader.
- (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.
 - (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. Respect is built into the very fabric of submission as well.
 - (1) Remember that submission is not merely obedience. One can do something and still not be in submission.
 - (2) Submission is a willful act of bringing yourself under the oversight of another. There is a flow of authority and direction.
 - (3) To have a heart of disrespect but an external act of following is a contradiction that given time will explode.
 - (4) If you respect your husband you will submit willingly even in areas you are uncertain about. If you don't respect him there will be a consistent pattern of reluctance and hesitancy.
 - 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 way defined by her or himself. Rather it is defined in terms such as nourishing and cherishing her, protecting her, understanding her, providing for her and such.

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- (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 and you do so intentionally and willingly.
 - (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. One of top problems I hear from a husband when counseling a couple is that the wife shows no respect.
 - b. It is common and easy for a wife to claim that she is *not* being disrespectful but that is not the issue.
 - c. 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. This leads to another point that appears minor but is not. The respect and submission you are to show is towards your husband, not other's (Ephesians 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1).
7. 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.
 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.

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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 reined 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.
 - 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)

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5. Note that the focus is upon the inner person rather than the external. It is upon the heart that the Lord looks first and foremost.
 - a. This speaks to the need to grow with respect to your salvation.
 - b. You see, a godly wife is concerned about how she is spiritually dressed. She is not the busybody that the Bible speaks out against. 1 Timothy 5:13, “At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.”
 - c. The imagery used here is of how a wife clothes herself. In a sense it is spiritual clothing.
 - (1) Chaste speaks of a purity in her conduct. It is a keeping of oneself from a life of sin.
 - (a) James 3:17 says But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.
 - (b) So she walks according to the wisdom of God. She is a student of the book of Proverbs.
 - (2) “Respectful” literally means fearing. It speaks of the fact that she is always to be respectful of her husband.
 - (a) Her behavior is never to contradict her words.
 - (b) Many a wife claims innocence because she didn’t actually say a word. Yet upon examination you find that she speaks volumes by body posture and facial expressions. All saying clearly that she does not respect her husband.
 - (c) This is not merely before him, but it would be in private, and public conversations with others.
 - d. Peter does not forbid the dressing up of a woman.
 - (1) But he is warning her to keep it in the proper place.
 - (2) the word for ‘adornment’ is *kosmos* and is what we get ‘cosmetics’ from

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- (3) It can speak of the common manner in which women use and even rely on the external appearance to attract and keep men. In our culture this is a huge issue where aging is seen as bad.
- (4) It can also speak of the adorning of the heart, as Peter uses it here.
- (5) The braiding of hair back then was a huge undertaking. The ladies would spending long hours and large money doing intricate braids with gold wove in among it.
- e. Her concern is that true adornment of a quiet and gentle spirit.
 - (1) She responds with a gentle attitude when faced with difficult times.
 - (2) She is quiet in her spirit, showing that she has no fear of the future. Her faith is strong in the sureness of the Lord.
 - (3) She is not pushy or harsh; nor is she boisterous and loud. It calmly bears up under other people's disturbances.
- f. And the reason this is desirable for her is because it is precious in the Lord's eyes. That is the priority for her
6. It is commanded in the context of a mixed marriage.
 - a. Too often the wife justifies bitterness because her husband is not saved. But instead, she is to take the view of eternity and seek to evangelize him God's way. Not so much by word first, but by deed.
 - b. "Without a word . . ." does not mean that the wife never speaks, even regarding the things of the Lord.
 - c. The Bible is clear that the regenerating work of the Lord is ultimately done by the use of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22).
 - d. But if the husband is resistant to the spoken word of the gospel, then the wife is encouraged by Peter that her silent actions of a changed life will be far more effective.
 - e. Instead of trying to argue or debate her husband into the kingdom, the wife is told that she is far more effective by taking up her God-ordained role as a submissive/respectful helper to her husband.

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- f. This is another indication of the foolishness of God's wisdom. It speaks of that embracing of weakness so as to have the power of God work. This makes little sense to us and is something that must be taken by faith.
 - (1) When a wife refuses this manner, she steps out of God's plan and into sin.
 - (2) Yet, too often she wrongly believes that God will honor her sinful response.
 - (3) But great things can occur if she will only submit herself first to the Lord and then to her husband.
 - g. There is an assumed argument from lesser to greater in this section as well. If a wife is to have a gentle spirit before her unsaved husband, how much more should this be present with one who is a Christian?
 - h. A man knows how to fight, but he knows little regarding a gentle heart.
7. It is to be faith-filled.
- a. This is what is meant by not doing it in fear in vs 6. It is trusting that God's ways are always better than ours.
 - b. A aspect of this fear is living in the world of "what if."
 - (1) There are situations that can grip the wife as she submits to her husband. Especially if he is less than wise with his time and money.
 - (2) Often the wife then feels it is proper to step out of her God ordained role and try to 'fix' things.
 - c. But the motivation is out of the fear of the unknown rather than out of obedience and trust in the Lord.
 - d. As an aside, to you Christian men, this should not be the way your wife is made to live with you. Your task is to create a home where fear is not an abiding presence.
- E. A final duty is to grow in your role as wife so as to be a teacher and example to younger women (Titus 2:3-5).
- 1. Not just any older woman is directed to be a teacher of younger women.

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- a. Notice that Paul first gives a list of character qualities that this woman is to have. If these are absent, then she really is not to be a teacher of other women.
- b. In verse 4 you will see the word “that.” The Greek word is *hina* and speaks here of the purpose of why older women should seek to have these qualities.
- c. They are to be actively encouraging and teaching the younger women to live out their lives in a biblical, God honoring fashion.
- d. And notice that in verse 5 they are to help teach the younger wife to be subject/submissive to their own husbands.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Beloved, the marriage relationship is a truly unique relationship.
- B. It was established by God and defined by God.
- C. Great harm is done when we choose to operate in our marriages outside the boundaries that God has established.
 1. It is not enough to stay married.
 2. It is necessary to stay married and do it in a manner that is pleasing and glorifying to the Lord.
 3. And if it is not, then the answer is not to divorce, but the repent.
- D. Wives, it is to your own husbands that you are responsible to.
 1. Direct your heart towards him.
 2. Learn to look to him for your direction.
 3. Learn to trust him.
 4. Learn to respect him.
 5. As yourself, are you seeking to submit single-mindedly to your husband as the Church submits to the Lord Jesus Christ?
- E. Husband, take a long, hard look at yourself.
 1. Take up the reigns of headship.
 2. Stop shifting blame off onto your wife and take full responsibility of your home, your finances, your children, and the spiritual health of your household.

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3. Become biblically literate. Take advantage of opportunities to learn here at church. And then take that knowledge back into your homes.
4. And lastly, make it a desirable thing for your wife to submit to you. Be a man of God.

Community Group Questions

- **As we come to the end of discussion regarding duties, what has stood out to you?**
- **How does embracing your specific duties create opportunities for evangelism? This should dominate the group's discussion so give thought to this.**