

Course Title: THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Goal of This Lesson: The purpose of this lesson is to express and codify the Will of God in our homes.

Note: This lesson contains important principles, especially for those who really want to understand biblical doctrine. These lessons go hand-in-hand with prayer and revelation.

INTRODUCTION

The principle of including Jesus Christ as a partner in any relationship is vital to Christians who desire to enjoy His blessings on their relationships. It matters not whether the relationship is between husband and wife, parent and child, or employer and employee; every Christian's life should be "Christ centered," including every area of his human relationships. When God showed Moses the Tabernacle plan, He gave specific instructions concerning how the twelve tribes would camp in relation to the Tabernacle.

They were to place the Tabernacle—God's earthly dwelling place for that era—in the center of the camp. (Numbers 1:50.) How symbolic that is of the place that Jesus Christ desires in all of our relationships! He should be the center of all relationships, whether they are business, social, or family.

The Christian should make every major decision of life only after first consulting the Lord and His enduring, unchanging Word.

Reading Assignment: [Eph 5:22-33 NKJV]

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord [does] the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife [see] that she respects [her] husband.

THE THREE-FOLD RELATIONSHIP

The Husband-Wife-Lord Relationship (v.22-23). To comprehend the idea of a wife being in submission to her husband, it is essential that we consider first the whole concept of submission.

Paul the apostle commanded us to submit ourselves to one another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:21). Moreover, John taught us that the way we show love to God is by showing love to one another, which involves submission: (v.20) If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (I John 4:20)

We are our brother's keeper! We are obligated to submit to the authorities that God has ordained in life, and we have a moral obligation to submit to one another in mutual humility and love. In this three-fold relationship, whatever we do to one another, we do also "unto the Lord."

The Wife Subject to Her Husband (v.24) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

It is unpopular and politically incorrect today to speak of a wife submitting to her husband, but it is a subject that honest-hearted Christians cannot avoid.

This subject is important because God gave the directives for submission. The first mention of this subject came after mankind had fallen in sin and thereby had removed himself from his perfect relationship with God in the Garden of Eden.

Following the Fall, God cursed the serpent (Satan), man, woman, and the ground (Genesis 3:14-19). Part of these curses involved the wife's required submission to her husband.

- God established the principle of the woman's submission to her husband in the midst of a tragic moment in the history of humanity.

Submission to authority represents a source of strength and protection that flows out of mutual love. For instance, when a husband exercises authority with his family, he should do so out of a heart of love for his family and his fear of God.

- He bears a great spiritual and physical responsibility to his family and he will give an account to God for the spiritual leadership he provides or fails to provide.

As with all biblical principles, when an individual properly recognizes and responds to the divinely established order of authority, the outcome is positive.

By submitting to her husband in this relationship, the wife is submitting to Jesus Christ—the primary party in all of her relationships.

The Husband is Head of His Wife

Male headship does not give a husband the right to bully or abuse his wife. Moreover, a person should not regard the divine order of authority as a suggestion that God considers the man to be more intelligent than the woman, or that the man is wiser in making decisions.

Quite to the contrary, marriage involves a partnership where there is cooperation between a husband and wife that also includes God in the decision-making process. Still, God knew that the administration of any cooperative effort should have someone in charge who must bear the primary responsibility of leadership.

Male chauvinists of this century did not decide that the man should be the head of the house, but God did thousands of years ago.

As with all positions of tremendous responsibility, the husband should approach his God given appointment with humility and a great degree of introspection.

Some of God's greatest leaders saw themselves as incapable and not deserving of the position of leadership they filled.

Moses questioned God's judgment in selecting him. Gideon's response to God was similar. (Exodus 3:11; Judges 6:14-15)

- The one thing that both Moses and Gideon left out of the equation at these moments in their lives was the Lord's promise that He would be with them.

When both husband and wife recognize the extent and the limitation of their scripturally defined roles, and they yoke themselves to the Almighty, they will discover a great source of strength for their marriage.

- They will be able to withstand storms that would otherwise overcome them.

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." The first of the three cords—Jesus Christ—makes the difference between success and failure.

THE HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP (v. 25-29)

The husband-wife relationship is something that one should regard as sacred, never take it for granted.

When someone creates a machine or product, he usually provides a book of instructions to go along with it. Failing to follow those instructions may result in damage to the machine or product, or could possibly even be dangerous to the operator. In the Bible, God gave us explicit instructions concerning the marriage relationship, and following them will result in a lasting, beautiful relationship.

Love Is the Basis of the Relationship

Love has a unique value that is unlike any other relationship; one cannot purchase, demand, or force it.

Every married couple should learn the principle that love can only be given and received. The moment a person demands that another love him, that love becomes distorted. Even if one responds to the demands, the gift is something far less than love.

- Individuals should give and receive love freely and without force or compulsion.

Love Is Greater Than All Other Virtues

We may be spiritually gifted or have great talents; but if we do not have love, we are “as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (I Corinthians 13:1)

Love is greater than good works and all our talents combined, because all of these great gifts and qualities of character become cold and sterile without it. (I Corinthians 13:13)

On the other hand, spoken words and actions coupled with love provide beautiful and long-lasting effects. man who ever lived loved his own body and carefully met its needs and desires.

Paul declared, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it” (Ephesians 5:29). Paul also penned the words: “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (Ephesians 5:28).

Love is reciprocal

Its growth does not depend on what someone does for us, but returns to us in proportion to what we do for the other person. The husband that learns this principle will do everything he can to love and truly value his wife.

One Flesh (v.30-32)

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverences her husband.

- The process of becoming one flesh requires both leaving and cleaving. (Genesis 2:24.) The word leaving indicates that one should leave physically, emotionally, and financially.

The Hebrew word for cleave, connotes “two things sticking very closely together, like two pieces of wood glued together.” Once the glue has dried, the wood cannot be torn apart without doing damage to both pieces. It just does not come apart cleanly, and neither do marriages that suffer separation or divorce.

Leaving physically

If at all possible, it is best for a couple to put some physical distance between them and both sets of parents, at least for the first year of marriage. This gives them time to become a couple in their own right. Sometimes cross-cultural marriages are challenging, especially between individuals from very different backgrounds.

However, every marriage is somewhat a cross-cultural marriage, even if the two partners grew up across the street from each other. Physically putting distance between the new couple and both sets of parents affords the new couple an opportunity to begin the process of developing a new culture that grows out of their combined experiences.

- The couple merges the paradigms from two different families into one new family.

Leaving emotionally

Both husband and wife should understand that their marriage is more important than ties to their respective families. This means that a man should not find fault with his wife because she is not like his mother. Similarly, a woman should not find fault with her husband because he is not like her father.

Leaving financially

Financial separation is more important than many parents realize. Both sets of parents should allow the new husband to become the head of the new family unit and be the provider for his wife: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Timothy 5:8).

The newly-married couple should not depend on their parents for financial or material needs. Sometimes, even if they do not mean to, parents use money and material things to control their married children.

- Only when the two individuals truly leave can “cleaving” occur as God intended, where the two become one flesh.

They should be the best of friends—praying together, thinking together, laughing together, suffering together, working together, and caring for each other. Further, becoming one means that neither partner keeps secrets from the other, because secrecy works to destroy the unity of marriage. The cleaving between husband and wife is more important than work, friends, the new baby, or anything else.

CONCLUSION

Scripturally-based Christian relationships are different from secular relationships because Jesus is the primary partner in that relationship. To leave Him out of any of our relationships is an admission of failure.

- The only way to insure good and healthy human relationships is to include Christ in its center.

When it comes to what is really important in life, a person should consider who is on the throne of his life and relationships. Is God in charge of our lives and leading us daily? Jesus desires to be the leader and to direct our way through the uncharted waters of our lives.

A true believer will give Jesus His rightful place on the throne and will consistently follow His leadership in all his relationships.

**Assignment
WORKSHEET**

Student Name: _____
Print Full First Name Middle Initial Print Full Last Name

Church Name: _____ **Pastor:** _____

Date: _____

Take your time to review the lesson before you provide your answers.

1. According to the lesson, whether a relationship is between husband and wife, parent and child, employer and employee, what should the Christian life be like?

2. According to the lesson, the husband-wife-Lord relationship is essential that we consider the whole concept of what?

3. According to the lesson, as with all positions of tremendous responsibility, the husband should approach his God-given appointment with a great degree of what?

4. According to the lesson, the husband-wife relationship is something that should be regarded as sacred and never what?

5. According to the lesson, the word leaving indicates that one should leave three different things. What are they?

6. According to the lesson, when two individuals truly “leave”, then “cleaving” can occur as God intended where the two become one flesh. When this occurs, husband and wife is more important than what?

7. Please fill in the blanks. The Christian should make every major ____ sion of life only after first _____ the Lord and His Word.
8. According to the lesson, the husband bears great responsibility and will give an account to God whether he _____. Please select the best answer below:

A. provides or fails	C. fails or succeeds
B. provides or succeeds	D. listens and obeys
9. According to the lesson, when an individual properly recognizes and responds to the divinely established order of authority, the outcome is positive.
Please select the best answer: ☐ True ☐ False
10. According to the lesson, when both husband and wife yoke themselves to the Almighty, they will be able to withstand storm that would otherwise _____ them. Please select the best answer below:

A. sabotage	C. welcome
B. deny	D. overcome
11. Please fill in the blank. According to 1 Corinthians 13:13, Love is greater than good works and all our talents combined, because all of these great gifts and qualities of character become _____ without it.

A. cold and stale	C. stale and sterile
B. old and sterile	D. cold and sterile
12. According to the lesson, the couple merges the para____ from two different _____ li_____ into one _____ family.

Congratulations on completing this lesson. While some lessons may seem harder than others, you must always study to show yourself approved unto God, and reveal to others, what God has given you.
