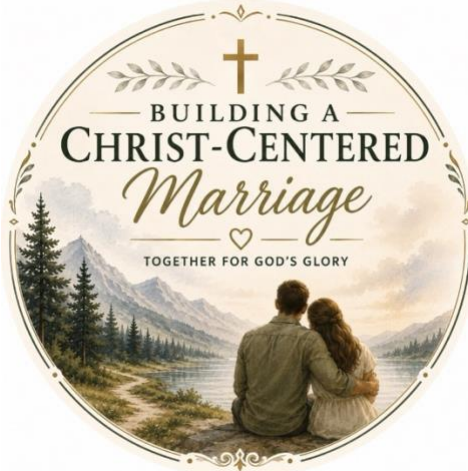




LOVE, RESPECT, AND BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

LESSON TWO

BUILDING A CHRIST CENTERED MARRIAGE

Ten Biblical Lessons for Growing Together in Love, Faith, and Unity

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| 1. God's Design for Marriage (A, B, C) | 6. God's Gift of Physical Intimacy |
| 2. Love, Respect, and Biblical Leadership | 7. Making Decisions Together |
| 3. Communication That Builds Unity | 8. Money, Work, and Stewardship |
| 4. Healing from Past Hurts, Bitterness, and Unforgiveness | 9. Protecting Your Marriage |
| 5. Growing Spiritually Together | 10. Growing Old Together and Leaving a Godly Legacy |

Main Scripture Passage: Ephesians 5:21–33

Memory Verse: Ephesians 5:33

Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Main Truth: Biblical leadership follows Christ. A husband leads through sacrificial love, and a wife honors God through wise and faithful respect.

Lesson Purpose: To understand how love, respect, and leadership work together under the authority of Jesus Christ.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Many people have seen leadership used as a reason to command, control, or silence another person. Others reject leadership because they have only seen it practiced in a hurtful way. Neither choice follows the example of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5 places both husband and wife under Christ. The husband is called to love his wife as Christ loved the church. The wife is called to respect her husband and submit as unto the Lord. These commands never make one person more valuable than the other. They give each person a serious duty before God.

Biblical leadership is not about getting one's own way. It is marked by humility, sacrifice, truth, listening, protection, and service. Biblical respect is not fear, silence, or blind agreement. It is a willing attitude that honors God while speaking truth with wisdom and kindness.

IN THIS LESSON, WE WILL STUDY THE FOLLOWING TRUTHS:

1. Both husband and wife live under the authority of Christ.
2. A husband leads through sacrificial love and service.
3. A wife shows respect with wisdom, truth, and godly strength.

MAIN SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Ephesians 5:21–33

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 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.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

PART 1: BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE UNDER CHRIST

Philippians 2:3–4

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Acts 5:29

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

1. Jesus Christ, not the husband or the wife, is Lord of the home.
2. Both husband and wife must fear God, obey His Word, confess sin, and treat each other with honor.
3. The husband's headship is a responsibility under Christ. It does not make him the owner, lord, or Savior of his wife.
4. A wife's submission is also unto the Lord. No husband has the right to command his wife to sin or disobey God.
5. Pride asks, "How can I win?" Humility asks, "How can we honor Christ together?"

Practical Illustration: The Lantern and the Washed-Out Bridge

Samuel and Lydia were walking home after dark. Samuel carried the lantern and walked in front. Lydia noticed that heavy rain had damaged the small bridge ahead. She asked Samuel to stop and look.

Samuel could have ignored her because he was leading the way. Instead, he listened. Together they chose a safer path. Samuel still carried the lantern, but Lydia saw a danger that he had missed.

Biblical leadership does not mean that one person has all the wisdom. A wise husband listens, and a wise wife speaks the truth with respect. Both follow the light of God's Word.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. When you disagree, are you trying to honor Christ or prove that you are right?
2. What is one way you can listen more carefully to your husband or wife?
3. What proud habit is making love or respect harder in your marriage?
4. Is there any family custom that you need to test by the Word of God?

PART 2: A HUSBAND LEADS THROUGH SACRIFICIAL LOVE

Mark 10:43–45

But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: **44** And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. **45** For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

1. Christ is the pattern for a husband's leadership. Jesus loved, served, sacrificed, and gave Himself.
2. A husband should use his strength and position to protect and bless his wife, not control or frighten her.
3. To dwell with his wife according to knowledge, a husband must learn her needs, burdens, fears, hopes, and abilities.
4. The words "weaker vessel" do not mean that a wife is less valuable or less intelligent. The verse commands the husband to treat her with special care and honor.
5. A godly husband listens before deciding. He welcomes his wife's wisdom and does not punish her for speaking honestly.
6. Spiritual leadership begins with example. A husband should be ready to pray, confess his sin, ask forgiveness, and take the first step toward peace.

Practical Illustration: The First to Serve

Daniel returned home after a long day and found that Sarah was tired and discouraged. Supper was late, the children needed care, and several chores were unfinished.

Daniel could have complained because he was tired too. Instead, he asked, "What can I do to help?" He cared for the children while Sarah finished supper. Later, he listened as she shared the burden she had carried that day.

Daniel did not lose his leadership by serving. He showed the kind of leadership Jesus taught. He used his strength to lift a burden instead of adding to it.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Husbands, what burden is your wife carrying that you could help lift?
2. Do your words help your wife feel safe, honored, and heard?
3. When did you last ask your wife for her thoughts before making a choice?
4. What step can you take this week to lead through prayer, service, or confession?

PART 3: A WIFE SHOWS RESPECT WITH WISDOM AND TRUTH

Proverbs 31:11–12, 26

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. **12** She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. **26** She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

1. Respect begins in the heart and is shown through words, tone, choices, and faithfulness.
2. A respectful wife does not shame, mock, or speak against her husband to gain support from others.
3. Respect does not mean that a wife must hide her thoughts. Proverbs 31 describes a woman who opens her mouth with wisdom.
4. A wife can disagree honestly while speaking with kindness. Her goal should be truth and unity, not winning or controlling.
5. Trust grows when a wife keeps private matters private, speaks truth, and does good to her husband.
6. Biblical respect never requires a wife to hide violence, sexual abuse, threats, severe control, addiction, or repeated unfaithfulness. Danger and serious sin require safety and proper help.

Practical Illustration: Speaking with Courage and Respect

Joseph was thinking about taking a job far from home. Ruth had serious concerns about the children, their church, and the cost of moving. She did not mock Joseph or complain to her family.

Ruth asked for a quiet time to talk. She thanked Joseph for working hard, then clearly explained her concerns. Joseph listened. They prayed, gathered more facts, and decided to wait before making the move.

Ruth's respect did not require silence. Joseph's leadership did not require him to decide alone. Respect and leadership worked together because both wanted to honor Christ.

DISCUSSION AND SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Wives, do your words and tone show honor when you disagree with your husband?
2. Is there a concern you need to share with wisdom, truth, and kindness?
3. Do you speak about your husband in a way that builds trust or tears it down?
4. What is one good quality in your husband that you can thank him for this week?

A SIMPLE PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK

1. Set aside fifteen minutes without work, children, or other distractions.
2. Each person name one thing you appreciate about the other.
3. Ask, “What burden are you carrying, and how can I help?” Listen without defending yourself.
4. Pray together and ask Christ to help you grow in love, respect, and humble leadership.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for my spouse and for the marriage You have given us. Help me place Jesus Christ first in my heart and in our home.

Show me where pride, selfishness, fear, bitterness, or a desire for control has hurt our marriage. Help me confess my sin instead of defending it. Give me a humble heart that is willing to listen and change.

- **Husband prays:** teach me to love as Christ loved the church. Help me lead through service, sacrifice, truth, prayer, protection, and honor. Help me listen to my wife and value the wisdom You have given her.
- **Wife prays:** teach me to show godly respect. Help me speak with wisdom and kindness, remain faithful, and do good to my husband. Give me courage to speak truth while keeping a heart that honors You.

Help us forgive each other, pray together, and work as one. Where there is hidden sin or danger, bring truth, safety, repentance, and proper help. May our marriage show the love and faithfulness of Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.