

LESSON 7 Duties of a Wife

The woman is wise who knows that her role as a wife is one of vast responsibility, and she is ready for God to show her how to be the kind of wife He wants her to be. She recognizes God's principles for a happy, lasting marriage and learns to apply them.

God's Word clearly states what the position of the man and woman in the home is to be, and the harmony of a Christian marriage depends upon this. While the husband's God-given authority is for the protection of his wife and should be accepted joyfully, her concern and care also lend much to the spiritual health of the home.

In this lesson we will reaffirm what it means for a woman to give her husband his rightful place in her life and, in so doing, becomes a stabilizing influence in the home.

The Plan

- A. To Love Her Husband
- B. To Make the Home Happy

The Goals

1. Discuss the basic elements in the marriage relationship that will protect it in times of difficulty.
2. Describe the role of a wife in making the home happy.

A. TO LOVE HER HUSBAND

Goal 1. Discuss the basic elements in the marriage relationship that will protect it in times of difficulty.

To Love and Respect Him

There are those who say that the principal duty of a wife is to be submissive to her husband. The apostle Paul, in writing to Titus, reminded him to instruct the older women to conduct themselves as godly women should, so that they could “train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God” (Titus 2:4–5). So we see that God does expect wives to be submissive to their husbands. The wives’ willingness to conform to this biblical admonition depends to a great extent upon how much she loves her husband, and upon how much he himself conforms to the pattern Christ left for the head of the house.

Perhaps more important than endeavoring to determine what is the *principal* duty of a wife, we need to keep in mind the emphasis the Bible gives to the love and respect a husband and wife must have for each other. Without these basic elements, a marriage is on shaky ground. But a man and wife who enter marriage believing it to be a divine institution, patterned after the relationship of Christ to the church (Ephesians 5:21–33), are building on a stable foundation.

In Lesson 6, we discussed what the Bible means by the command to husbands to love and respect their wives. Much the same can be said about the command to wives. Husbands

and wives can either hinder or help one another in being what God wants them to be, by neglecting or fulfilling their own responsibilities as Christian companions. As it is the responsibility of the husband to love and respect his wife as the weaker partner, it is the wife's responsibility to love and respect her husband as the stronger, the protector, and the head of the family. Whether his faults are many or few, a husband deserves his wife's respect.

Each one . . . must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:33)

There is no place in a home for abusive words between a husband and wife. They should not irritate or annoy each other by constant complaining and scolding. Certainly a wife should never ridicule, criticize, or scold her husband in the presence of others. Nor should a husband disrespect his wife in private or public. Love and respect between a husband and wife afford great protection to their marriage when difficulties come. Moods and feelings of either partner do not change what their marriage is founded upon.

Application

- 1** Memorize Ephesians 5:33.
- 2** What basic elements in the marriage relationship protect it when difficulties come?
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- 3** Circle the letter in front of the TRUE statement.
 - a)** A man who expects his wife to be submissive to him, should conform to the pattern Christ left for the husband.
 - b)** If a husband does not conform to the pattern Christ left for him, his wife need not be submissive to him.
 - c)** Wives are commanded to love and respect their husbands, not to be submissive to them.



To Be Faithful to Him

The actual wedding ceremony differs in some respects from country to country. Even within a particular culture or country, the vows exchanged between a bride and groom vary, depending

upon the form of ceremony they have selected. But since marriage is a religious institution, it is subject to the law of God. And the Word of God addresses itself to those desiring God's sanction and approval upon their marriage.

The standard upheld by the Bible, as relates to the married state, is very different from those upheld and practiced in many parts of the world today. Jesus himself, quoting from the law of Moses, said,

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’
So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Mark 10:7–9)

Verses 9 through 12 of this same chapter further confirm the fact that God means for the sacred relationship of marriage, into which a man and woman enter, to continue as long as they live. Either marriage partner who obtains a divorce and marries another is guilty of adultery.

A man and woman who take the marriage vows “become one” in God's sight, and if they view this sacred commitment through God's eyes, they know it means to “*remain* one.” Married couples must remain together in times of sickness and health, times of financial difficulties and in plenty, in good times and in bad. A wife's patience, understanding, and encouragement have helped many a husband through periods of crisis that he could not have weathered alone.

Proverbs 31 has many things to say about the right kind of wife. We are given a description of a good wife, one who honors the Lord (v. 30). The writer says this kind of wife is hard to find, but “she is worth far more than rubies” (v. 10). She is pure and righteous, upright and honest, dependable. She is faithful to her husband in thought, word, and actions. “She brings him good, not harm” (v. 12). She is not like the woman of Proverbs 6:24 who tempts other men. A man is fortunate who has a wife he loves, trusts, and sees as surpassing all other women (v. 29).

Application

4 What is the best source for finding God's pattern for marriage?

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- 5 Circle the letter of the TRUE statement.
- a) Marriage and divorce were both instituted by God.
 - b) A marriage is free from problems if both the husband and wife are Christians.
 - c) A good wife will be faithful to her husband, whatever difficulties may arise.
- 6 In what Old Testament book do we find a description of a good wife?
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B. TO MAKE THE HOME HAPPY

Goal 2. Describe the role of a wife in making the home happy.

By Being an Example in Word and Deed

A wife, by the way she speaks, can be a joy and example to her husband, her children, and to all who know her. Or she can make life miserable for all who come within the sound of her voice. Nagging, complaining, and a sharp tone of voice are irritating and make everyone in the home unhappy. Proverbs 21:19 says, “Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.”

Children who are raised under this kind of influence in the home often tend to follow the same pattern when they marry and establish a home of their own.

In 1 Timothy 5:13 the Bible warns against being gossips and busybodies; that is, talking of things one should not, and meddling in the affairs of others. But the cheerful attitude and the kind, loving words of a wife and mother can have a great influence upon the entire family.

She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. (Proverbs 31:26, 28)

As we continue the study of this lesson, we will discover many ways in which a wife is an example in her actions, deeds, and speech.

Application

7 Memorize Proverbs 31:26, 28.

8 In what two ways should a godly wife and mother be an example?

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By Being a Good Homemaker

Titus 2:5 implies that married women are to be good homemakers. A woman's first responsibility is to her family, caring for them and making the home happy. This is not a small task, but it is a God-given task, and God will help and strengthen the woman who purposes to be the best possible wife and mother.

A good wife and mother learns to cook what is good for her family and what pleases them, with the money available to her. In order to prepare wholesome food for them, she must learn about the right kinds of food. It is a joy for a woman who loves her family to keep the home pleasant and clean, and to cheerfully do her part in seeing that their needs are taken care of. If she honors God, she does not consider it a burden to have meals prepared for her family at the proper time and served as attractively as possible, to have her husband and children's clothes taken care of, and the house in order. These are acts of love for those who are dearest to her. And this is the kind of wife and mother that a family likes to come home to.

Application

9 Name at least three ways that a woman can be a good homemaker.

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By Careful Spending

The cheerfulness of a godly woman is reflected in everything she does. She may find it more difficult to be cheerful if she does not have the money necessary to take care of her family and household properly. But God can help her to be satisfied with what she has, and to discipline herself not to overspend the family income. If she trusts God, her joy will be in knowing that He will never abandon her and her family.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I will forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

Women need to look for ways to save money when buying food and other items for the home. It is not necessary to buy the most expensive products. There are times, of course, when a woman has special needs to take to God in prayer. He expects His children to ask Him for what they need, but first to be thankful for what they already have. Paul writes,

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)

Application

10 Name at least two ways a woman may be able to save money in the home, giving either your own suggestions or those found in the lesson.

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11 Memorize Philippians 4:6. Recite it to someone.




Loving and Training the Children

A mother has a special privilege and responsibility in loving, teaching, and training the children, for she is usually with them more than the father is.

From what the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:5, we believe that Timothy learned the truths of God's Word from his mother and grandmother. It was Hannah's love for God and for her son Samuel that led her to consecrate her son to God's service (1 Samuel 1:24–28). Moses' mother taught him so well that when he was older he could make the decision to serve God (Hebrews 11:24–25). The words, "Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her" (Proverbs 31:28), are a tribute to godly women who faithfully assume the role of wife and mother.

Application

12 Which three of the following had godly mothers who taught them God's truths?

- a) Timothy, Moses, and Paul
 - b) Moses, Samuel, and Timothy
 - c) Samuel, Moses, and Paul
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Serving Outside the Home

Although a woman's first concern is her family, she also has other interests. The woman we read about in Proverbs 31 is not lazy. She worked on the farm and had goods to sell. Of course, this would not apply in exactly the same way to many women today who do not live in a rural setting, but it is true that a wife can contribute to the general welfare of the home.

What a blessing it is for a wife to be able to organize her work in such a way that she is also able to do other things outside of the home. However, a husband must be careful not to be unreasonable in his expectations. A wife cannot handle all of the responsibilities of the home and children and those outside the home without considerable help from her husband.

The kind of woman we have been studying about in this lesson is wise, generous, and kind (Proverbs 31:20). God gives her strength and honor because she fears the Lord and obeys Him. "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come" (v. 25). This beauty of character is far better than a pretty face, for "beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (v. 30).

Application

13 What two conditions are necessary for a woman to be able to carry responsibilities outside of the home?

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Check Your Answers

- 7** When you have memorized Proverbs 31:26, 28, recite the verses to another person.
- 1** When you have memorized the verse well, recite it to another person.
- 8** In her speech and actions.
- 2** Love and respect between husband and wife.
- 9** By preparing wholesome and attractive meals for her family, taking proper care of her children, having her house clean and in order
- 3** Statement **a)** is true.
- 10** Women who are disciplined to buy only what is necessary can save the family money; they can purchase the less expensive items for the home.
- 4** The Bible
- 11** When you have learned the Scripture verse well, recite it to another person.
- 5** Statement **c)** is true.
- 12b)** Moses, Samuel, and Timothy
- 6** Proverbs
- 13** Her work at home should be organized, and she needs the help of her husband.