
YOURS, MINE, AND OURS

Breakfast so early, dear. I need to get these children set for school before 7:30. If you can help in bathing them, then I can go about fixing the breakfast, sir. Please, I'll appreciate it." "Appreciate what?" said Mr. Cole. "Don't let your head swell just because you are the one providing food in this house. You always forget that both you and your money are mine. I told you am very hungry and needs my breakfast immediately and you are saying 'children'. You want me to come down to the level of bathing your children, simply because am jobless? Even if you make all the money in the world, you are still a woman; and am still the head of this home. Even the Bible says women should submit to men." "Sorry Sir", said Mrs. Cole, "it's because the woman I approached to lend me some money to complete their school fees agreed to meet me in front of their school by 8 a.m. If I'm late she would be gone by the time I get there, and they will send these children back home again today." "Wow, madam money wants to borrow money. You behave as if you have all the money in the world. If not, why should you put the two-year-old boy in school? And when my mother called to ask for money you couldn't give her anything. Yet you are packing all the children to school. Go on bearing your burden – that's how you want it. But just don't let me go hungry in this house, again. Otherwise, I will throw you out and bring in a woman of substance."

This is a common scenario in many of today's homes. The roles were not just reversed but totally loaded upon the shoulder of the woman. The woman provides the food, pays the rent, pays the children's school fees, clothes the family, pays hospital bills when the need arises. Then she makes the home (furnishing and cleaning), cooks the meals, does the shopping etc. Consequently, she has to take up an employment in order to meet up with these load of responsibilities while the husband sits at home glued to the TV or video set or read newspapers. He only goes out to see a few friends in their workplaces, chat away his time and come back home, ready to attack and terrorize the wife and children. The picture is really bad.

A marriage may be made in heaven, but the maintenance must be done here on earth, someone has rightly noted. The challenge of being married is actually learning to keep that relationship alive, romantic and interesting throughout the life of the union. The couple must be devoted to each other and share the joys and sorrows of their married life together.

However, as the husband, the God-given position you occupy automatically confers on you certain responsibilities to fulfill to keep your marriage as yours, alive and blossoming.

HUSBAND: FAMILY'S PATTERN OF LOVE

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; . . . So, ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: . . . Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Ephesians 5:25,28,29; Genesis 2:24). Your first duty as a husband is to love your wife. This is a commandment, not an option. That is why you need to ask God for the grace to do this as His child. If you are not born again, you repent and accept Christ even now for then will you be able to love as God instructed. On this principle is wrapped up some other duties that make your relationship with your wife really enjoyable and smooth.

HUSBAND: WIFE'S PARTNER AND FAMILY PROTECTOR

“Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). This demand is closely related to the demand of loving your wife. Once you love your wife as God demands, you naturally cleave to her. You cannot be closer to any other person than the bone of your bones and the flesh of your flesh. You maintain and guard her. God gave this injunction in the Garden of Eden when he brought Eve to Adam. And so, undisputedly, the marriage union is that of leaving to cleave. You leave every other relationship and cleave to this woman. Allowing a third party or anything between you and her is to put the union in jeopardy. You do not allow in-laws to intrude into the relationship, or to ask unreasonable questions about your wife, that will tend to undermine your private lives or that may gender misunderstanding between you and your wife.

HUSBAND: FAMILY'S PROVIDER

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Genesis 2:15). God empowered Adam and ensured Adam was properly occupied. There was no use staying idle. This way, God became the first employer of labor. Adam was made to work in the immediate environment he found himself, canceling out any excuse for staying jobless. Man must prayerfully look around him; for there is something to do to feed his family. This is why a man must be gainfully employed before marriage. Adam was already working before God brought Eve to him. God would not have brought an added responsibility of taking care of a wife upon Adam if Adam did not prove himself capable of dressing the field. Therefore, as a husband, it is your responsibility to provide food, shelter, clothing and other necessities of life for your wife and

children. Your financial provision should be felt in the home. You will feel accomplished and at home when your family eats from your own sweat. Don't allow them to look elsewhere. It destroys your self-esteem and undermines your position as the head of the home. Apostle Paul puts it this way: ***“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).

HUSBAND: FAMILY'S PONTIFF (Spiritual head)

As the head of the union and home, you are to lead your family spiritually. Pray and study the word of God with your wife and children. You are to make sure that the family devotion is observed with all seriousness, as this is the powerhouse of the Christian home. It is advisable and most rewarding if you and your wife pray together first and have fellowship with God before waking up the children. This strengthens the tie that binds the two of you (Matthew 18:19). Remember, a family that prays together stays together. You are the bishop of your home. When you are asleep spiritually, the enemy breaks into your home and sows' tares of bitterness, unforgiving spirit, worldliness, backsliding in the things of God and sicknesses. Strange things may begin to happen in your relationship and home. ***“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong”*** (1 Corinthians 16:13).

Beloved brother, you need the grace of God through Jesus Christ the Lord. You must invite Him to be the Leader, Head, Owner and Breadwinner of your life and home. Why delay? Invite Him into your life and home today and you will have a glorious story to tell concerning your marriage and family. Don't be too busy, too naive, or too unenthusiastic to shift any of the above responsibilities to your wife.

WIFE: A CONFIDENT HELP-MEET

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18). Man needed a mate and so God solved that problem and made a help meet for him, thus God perfected the work of creation. God made you the wife to be your husband's help meet. This is a divine assignment for the woman. You help your husband to be what he was meant to be, to fulfill his dreams and aspirations. You help him to fulfill God's call and destiny for his life and your lives together.

God has made him who he is and to specification so that the only woman that truly fits that man is you. As a helpmeet you need to encourage, support and stay by your husband in his efforts to be the man he should be. Give him more compliments than criticisms; he gets more than enough of

criticism outside. So, your complaints and comparisons act like depressants while your compliments are like stimulants to him. When your husband has your full support and admiration, nothing will be huge for him to accomplish. Remember you are there to help him up, and not to pull him down with your actions or words. Know when he is in the right mood and or when he has something disturbing his mind and offer your suggestions and encouragement which he always yearns for, though he might not tell you this. Urge him to move on. With your support, your husband will go places.

WIFE: A COMPLEMENTARY SUBORDINATE

“Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 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. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:22-24). God designated the husband as the undisputed head of his wife – ***“Unto the woman he (God) said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”*** (Genesis 3:16). Note that the society did not assign the position of leadership to your husband; he was divinely appointed your head and leader of his family (1 Corinthians 11:3).

God made you to complement your husband, and not to control him. Submission is the word here. Even when God has so much blessed you that you almost equally contribute to the financial need of the home or you are even more highly secularly placed and more educated than your husband, you must have to submit to that man as unto Christ. This is the Bible command, in everything, except where sin is involved, or the laws of God is at stake. A saved woman will not make her husband feel threatened or insecure through her refusal to submit. Even if you have an unsaved husband, the Bible instructs: ***“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation*** (attitude, submissive conduct) ***of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear”*** (1 Peter 3:1-2). Therefore, there is no excuse in favor of disobedience or insubordination to your husband. It is even an avenue to win the unbelieving husband. The Bible is clear on this: ***“they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.”*** The spirit of gentleness and submissiveness is winsome, because you are obeying God’s command when you live in submission to your own husband.

WIFE: A COMPANION AT HOME

God declared it is not good for the man to be alone. You are to be your husband's companion, always very close and dear to his heart. Your husband has plans and dreams and needs to share with you. He has left mother and father and is now cleaving to you; stay nearby. He longs for your company. He needs your attention. How do you attend to this man God has given you? Do you make out time to be with him and listen to him? Don't be too busy for this nearness and rapport. Do you know his favorite food, and color, etc., and what interests him most? What makes him happy and what does he distaste? Are you careful as a wife and companion to detect all these? Draw closer to your husband, feel his pulse and be happier for it. Don't allow another woman, or even men, to get closer than you to him.

WIFE: A CONFIDANT AT HEART

Keep your husband's secret, secret. The first quality of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is that of trustworthiness. ***"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil"*** (Proverbs 31:11). No one wants his secrets leaked, including your husband's. If your husband is fond of saying, "make sure you don't tell anybody", or will always demand you promise to keep what he tells or wants to tell you to yourself, you may need to check up your life. Are you a tale-bearer or busybody in other men's affairs? You need to repent and call on God to set a watch over your mouth. A Christian woman should not keep company with gossips or tattlers. If your husband is not as open to you as he ought to, check up your life. A woman must be grave and quiet. As one flesh you were meant to plan and share together. Do not let out information to his people and/or your own people without his knowledge and consent.

WIFE: A CONSCIENTIOUS HOME MAKER

The woman is the homemaker. Without the wife, the man is just living in a house but when the wife comes into the house, a home is made, and a family begins. That is how God designed it to be. God made the woman and brought her to the man (Adam) and instituted marriage. You stand between your husband and the children. You are the center and the pivot of your home. As you make your home or want it to be, so will it be – heaven on earth or a den of confusion. ***"Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands"*** (Proverbs 14:1). You are to bring in sunshine and joy into the home. Your absence should be felt by all while your presence must be cherished by all in the home. ***"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband***

also, and he praiseth her" (*Proverbs 31:27-28*). The secret is that your relationship with your husband determines how your family will look like. Put on the right attitude; give your husband his rightful position and put the right things in place and you will rejoice in time to come. Remember also that you mould your children by your character towards your husband. The girls follow after you and the boys watch daddy's reactions closely, too. Thus, you affect their lives directly and indirectly and they will build their homes after your pattern. How are you building? Be wise. Ask God to help you. You can only achieve the best and be your best for God when you allow Christ to rule and reign in your heart and home.

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