

Roles and Responsibilities

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Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
Ephesians 5:21

Whose job is it anyway?

Running a household doesn't just happen, It takes intentionality to cover the responsibilities, tasks, and jobs. Who covers these responsibilities in your household?

1. Who takes the lead on paying bills?
2. Who does meal preparation?
3. Who does the laundry?
4. Who does car maintenance?
5. Who cuts the grass?
6. Who keeps the family calendar/schedule?
7. Who drives the car?
8. Who takes out the trash?

Other items to think about:

- Food shopping
- Taxes
- House decor
- Mail
- Paperwork
- Insurance
- Yard work
- Plans vacation
- Makes the coffee
- Shovels snow
- Kids ready for school
- Packs Lunches
- Cleans:
 - Kitchen
 - Bathrooms
 - Bedroom
 - Dusting

Be aware, there are plenty of opportunities for frustrations to creep in if there are unmet expectations in any of these areas. The enemy can take simple things and cause division in your marriage. Don't let him. Some ways to avoid frustration in these areas include:

- Clarity on:
 - Who is covering the responsibility/task

- When it will be completed
- How will it be done
- Grace when these things don't go as planned. (Hint: Your spouse is not avoiding responsibilities explicitly to annoy or frustrate you.)
- Communication when things don't go as planned.
- Quickly and completely do your responsibilities with excellence (like you are trying to win their heart all over again.)
- Be grateful and thankful as a principle. Frustration is harder to take root in a grateful heart.

Starting at the Beginning

In Genesis, God made everything perfect and laid out the rules. Mankind made the choice to go a different way. If Adam and Eve struggled, realize this isn't going to be any easier for you. Ever since the fall, God has been reconciling us to Him. We have real obstacles to overcome in our fallen state.

Since the Fall, husbands and wives have needed to make unity a focused goal. It comes less naturally, but it is vitally important to a successful marriage.

Genesis 2:20b-24

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,
 "This is now bone of my bones
 and flesh of my flesh;
 she shall be called 'woman,'
 for she was taken out of man."

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

God gave Adam and Eve a job to do together that neither of them could do separately: Be fruitful and multiply as well as rule the Earth and subdue it. Clearly they had different roles to play in this, but neither was less or more important than the other. To complete these tasks takes unity. This is God's design. The plan could not be fulfilled without each partner playing their vital role. Similarly, when the fall happened, the pain induced was along their specific roles:

Genesis 4:16

To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you.”

The woman’s specific and unique role was to bear the children. The cost for this sin would be significant. For the man the punishment is different and falls along his role of provider:

Genesis 4:17-19

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.
It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return.”

The man’s role was to produce for his family. After the fall, his job would be much harder and take much more effort.

Clearly man and woman have very well defined roles in the reproduction process, but to think it is strictly man’s role to be only the provider and woman to only do child rearing is unbiblical. There is plenty of room for overlap and distribution of strengths in different areas of the home. Most child raising commands and teachings reference both parents, not just one. Similarly, Proverbs 31 gives a glowing review of activities an admirable woman does:

Proverbs 31:10-29

A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.

She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.
She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.
She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.
In her hand she holds the distaff

and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.
When it snows, she has no fear for her
household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders
of the land.
She makes linen garments and sells them,

and supplies the merchants with sashes.
She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.
She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
She watches over the affairs of her
household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
“Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all.”

“No one could read this chapter and conclude that the wife's role is to be limited to childbearing. One profound impression is made from this: While the center of gravity was her home, she engaged in numerous and diverse activities: sewing, cooking, buying, selling, planting vineyards, making and selling fine linen and girdles, caring for the poor and needy and speaking with wisdom and kindness. While not all contribute economically to the home, all of these were directed toward the well-being of her family.” - Gary Chapman “The Marriage You’ve Always Wanted”

Paul talks about women at home in Titus, but likely he is referring to the kind of busyness listed in Proverbs 31. We can incorrectly put our preconceptions into the verse and cause misunderstanding. Think about Proverbs 31 when reading the section in Titus.

Titus 2:3-5

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge 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.

Other women examples in Scripture which don't fit the narrative many lead you to think about women in the Bible:

- Priscilla was a tentmaker (like Paul)
 - Acts 18:2, 18:6, Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19
- Lydia was a dealer in purple cloth
 - Acts 16:14
- Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza (the manager of Herod's household), Susanna, and many others supported Jesus out of their own means
 - Luke 8:1-3

Roles, Responsibilities and Children

How do children fit into the outline and roles we worked out as a married couple? They don't. It is physically impossible to do everything you were doing before children. Like the Christmas song says, "A Baby Changes Everything." Unless they are sleeping, children need nearly constant supervision at some level.

Less sleep, increased responsibilities, and increased cost, cause additional tension in the home. It takes a lot of effort, commitment, grace, and communication to keep the family together and committed to each other.

A short story from about Gary and Carolyn from *The Marriage You Always Wanted* by Gary Chapman

Discussion Questions:

1. Think about how your parents filled (or didn't fill) the roles listed above. How does this shape your perspective on these items?
2. What is something you personally can do to increase unity in your marriage (not something you can do together, but you can do yourself).

A Picture of Marriage

Paul gives us the imagery of the Church being the Bride of Christ. We have an amazing opportunity in marriage to display Christ to the world. We put Christ on display by the way we love our spouse. First we must submit and surrender to God before we can submit to our spouse.

Ephesians 5:21-33

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing[b] her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." [c] 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Instructions for Wives

When you're filled with the Spirit, it's easier to submit to one another. The way we submit to our own husbands is a direct reflection of the relationship we have with God and the evidence of His Spirit at work within us. Some key ways to fulfill your part of Ephesians 5:

- Respect him
- Affirm him
- Value his opinion
- Admire his wisdom and character
- Appreciate his commitment to you
- Consider his needs and values

Instructions for Husbands

Love your wives purely and sacrificially like Jesus loves us. Be sure to do this with tangible actions, not just words. Follow Christ's example by laying down your own wants, desires, and dreams for her. Love her like you would love yourself. Provide moral direction, strength, and protection. This carries a heavy responsibility to live a life worth following.

Husbands are given the heavy burden of making a final decision when consensus cannot be reached. If a decision has to be made, but there is not full agreement, husbands should make the choice. They may choose to go with the wife's preference or choose to let her decide. No matter the outcome, wins and losses are shared together.

Some empirical ways to serve your wife include:

- Servant leadership of your family
- Offer headship not dictatorship
- Build up your family through love

Mutual Submission

Submission is mutual. Notice that Paul does not say "Husbands, tell your wife to submit"—or, "Wives, tell your husband to step up and be the spiritual head of the home." Instead, he speaks to each person and asks each to work on his or her own attitude.

To have any hope of success, we need to start with submission to each other. Paul puts it this way: Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:21. He also gives us guidance on Christ's example in Philippians 2:

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Christ also directly says, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. John 15:12-13

Love and Respect

Dr. Emerson Eggerichs has written a book titled Love and Respect. In the book, he talks about a simple teaching from Paul in Ephesians 5:25-33:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Paul was single, so you know he needed the power of the Holy Spirit to write such powerful truths.

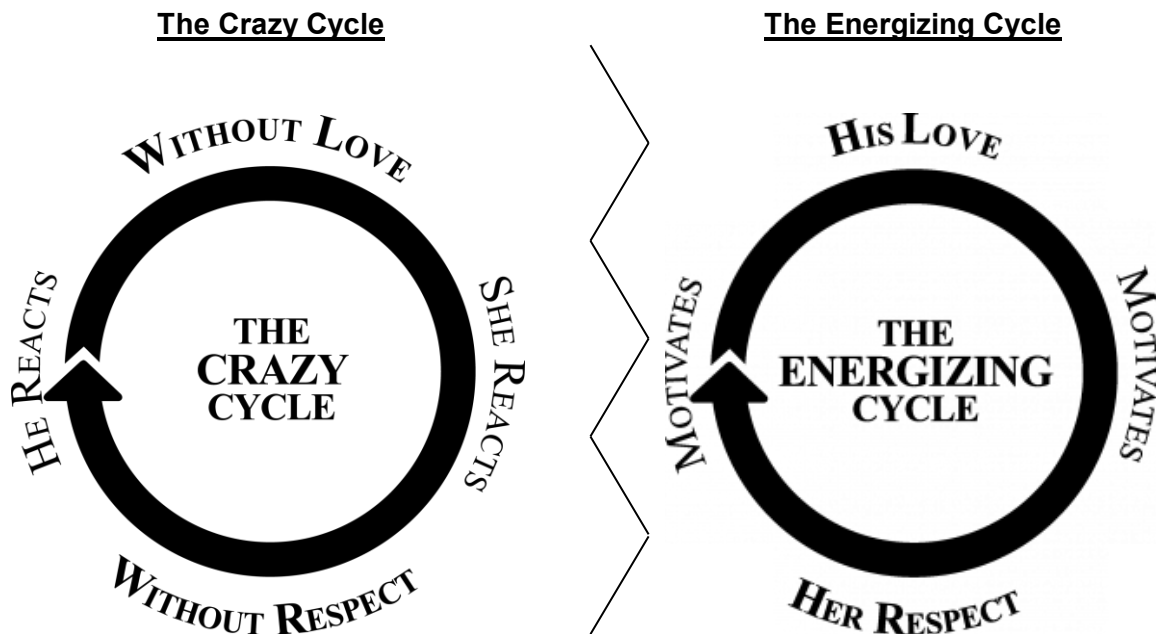
It seems strange that Paul needs to tell husbands to love their wives, but he tells wives to respect their husbands. Women generally don’t need to be reminded to love. Love comes more naturally to women than to men. Similarly, men don’t need to be reminded to respect their wives. Respect is the native language of men.

Men, treating your wife in unloving ways is among the most hurtful ways you can treat her. Women, disrespecting your husband is among the harshest things you can do to him. When given the choice, most men would rather be respected rather than loved if they needed to choose between the two.

The Crazy Cycle vs The Energizing Cycle

When men feel disrespected the natural reaction is to respond in an unloving way. His unloving response normally makes his wife feel unloved. In turn she responds in a disrespectful way. This is aptly named “The Crazy Cycle” because it is literally a crazy cycle that keeps spinning until it gets out of control.

The antidote is “The Energizing Cycle.” This is when a spouse intentionally chooses to respond in a loving or respectful way without regard to how they feel they are being treated. When the husband treats his wife in a loving way, she is more inclined to respond with more respect. Her increased respect, emboldens him to react with more love. A cycle like this will generate energy and excitement in the relationship.



Credit: Dr. Emerson Eggerichs

Learn more about Love & Respect from Dr. Emerson Eggerichs



LoveAndRespect.com



RightNowMedia.org Love & Respect

(Access available through CWC. Ask a leader)

<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/225912>

Marriage in Light of Eternity

God has revealed through scripture that we are eternal beings. Knowing this should cause us to think about our daily lives as a married couple differently. Singleness can offer opportunities to serve God and his people in ways that married life cannot. Alternatively, married couples have chances to serve God and his people in specific ways too.

Think about what you can join forces on that would be for the sole purpose of bringing God glory. What strengths does your spouse bring to this idea? What strengths do you bring? How can you support the cause and each other with those gifts and talents?

Recommended Books and Other Resources

1. You and Me Forever: Marriage In Light of Eternity by Francis Chan and Lisa Chan
2. The Marriage You Always Wanted by Gary Chapman
3. The Second Happy by Kevin and Marcia Myers
4. Love and Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs (also RightNow Media)
5. House or Home video study by Chip Ingram (RightNow Media)
6. From this Day Forward by Craig and Amy Groeschel