

Bible Laws For Staying In Love

God ordained marriage. It is His idea. He was present at the first wedding ceremony in Eden. Jesus said - "Have you not read that He Who made them from the beginning... male and female, and said, 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?' So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matt. 19:4-6) God took Eve from Adam's side in a picture of her relationship to him in Gen. 2:18-25 Not from his head to be over him, nor from his foot to be crushed by him, but from his side to be near him, close to his heart to be dear to him and under his arm to be protected by him.

Marriage was given for two basic reasons, each an earthly pattern of God's own longing for His race. The fused love and lives of a man and woman in marriage were to:

1. Bring into being a Christian family for the glory of God (Gen.1:28) as a pattern of His desire for a family of spiritual sons and daughters to share His happiness. (John 1:12; I John 3:1-2)
2. To share with each other the comfort and joys of spiritual, emotional, and sexual love (Matt. 19:4-6; Eph. 5:31, 32; I Cor. 7:2). In this way, a couple can share in a physical way the holy tender love Christ has for His Bride, the Church (all people who love Him and belong to Him). God has set up a marriage pattern based on His own perfect pattern for happiness and love between us and Him.

Study the relation of Christ to His Church and you will discover the perfect marriage relationship. The wife gives up her own name and takes on her husband's; she merges her life with his; she recognizes him as her head, and looks to him as her support, protector, and guide. She devotes her whole life to his happiness, and to carrying out his will in her love for him; she naturally looks to her husband to protect her from injury, insult, and want. She hangs her happiness on him, and expects that he will protect her, and he is bound to do it. Their reputation and interests become one; what affects her character or reputation, affects his. The faithful husband loves, cherishes, and honors his wife; he gives of his time, his labor and his talents to promote the interest of his bride. And the faithful husband is jealous for his wife's good name, and feels deeply when her feelings or reputation is injured. Christ is the perfect picture of the faithful husband; His true church is the perfect pattern of the loving wife.

The key reason why so many couples have lost the power to stay in love lies here. Unless husband and wife both belong to Christ, and have learned from Him what love is really like, both their marriage and their lives will suffer. Every marriage has a soul, an inner life which is lived out by both partners when they are alone together. This is shared by special "voices" used in private, that reveal what the other person is really like when no-one else is listening who needs to be impressed; by certain "looks" and little actions that form a whole language only the husband and wife know. Is the "soul" of your marriage Christian? Is your home a practical demonstration of two people who are following Jesus Christ, and trying to do as He asks for each other's happiness? Husband, are you a follower of Jesus, who knows how to take care of your wife, to love her and protect her, or are you a self-centered, demanding dictator? Do you take the leadership and your proper share of responsibility and give a good example for your family to respect and follow? Or have you become a coward in your own home, hiding from your responsibility in business, in social company or selfish pleasure? It is easy to convince yourself that your wife is to blame for your conduct. But you are a man responsible to God for the vows you took at a marriage altar. Have you kept them?

And wife, what of your life? Have you truly given up your rights to run an independent life, and gladly invested your time, talents, and energies in your husband and his work? Do you obey him, or do you fight to be in a leadership place that does not belong to you? Do you accept him as he is, or is your love for him conditional on what you want to make him into for your own happiness? Are you God's example of a wife who is gentle, tender and submissive - an inspiration to your man? Or are you bossy, hard, and domineering, filled with self-pity self-justification, and criticism? These are hard questions to answer, but if you will face them honestly, God can show you how to stay in love. And there is nothing more like heaven than a home that is in love with each other and God.

HOME HARMONY

Because true marriage is essentially spiritual as well as personal and physical, staying in love is primarily a spiritual battle. It is for this reason that surrender to God is so important for a happy, love-life. Mutual agreement is the essence of harmony. To live happily together, we must agree together. To agree together implies common knowledge and common unselfishness. When either or both of these conditions are not met, destructive disagreement may result. If two friends cannot agree, their friendship may die. If two lovers cannot agree, their love may grow cold. If a husband and wife cannot agree, their marriage may be headed for disaster. To take two people from different walks of life, with different backgrounds, different patterns of living and different ways of looking at life and marry them is one of the most difficult ways of achieving agreement in the world! Yet it is done every day, without so much as a course in college to show people how to do it.

Common knowledge, common unselfish choices for each other's highest happiness: these are the two essentials of home harmony, or unity in any group. Here is where the power of God can help a home so much. It is first of all, completely impossible for any group to have total common knowledge. No two people in the world think alike; no two people in the world have exactly the same amount of information. In a situation where two people cannot agree, they must appeal to someone who knows more about it than they do who can direct them as to the wisest choice. Here God is the only Person in the universe Who is totally qualified, with His infinite wisdom, all-knowledge, and a heart of love. He can guide each family member to the best course, which will bring a harmony to the home. Secondly, the power of Jesus Christ can save a person from the destructive force of selfishness that is the essence of sin and the chief cause of home conflict. He can not only forgive the guilty past that causes so much home quarrels, but come and live His life through the man or woman who surrenders completely to Him. The love He gives can deliver completely from the power of selfishness. With Him to ask direction and to give power to do that, which is best, peace and love can fill a home.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HUSBAND

God has set up the husband to be the leader of the home under Him. He is to make the final decisions that involve the well-being of his family and wife. He himself is to be a subject of his King, Christ Jesus. His effectiveness as a family leader will be directly proportionate to his willingness to follow God's directions. If he cannot learn to follow, he will never make a good leader. If he refuses to follow a loving, concerned God, he will fully deserve the trouble that his foolish rebellion will bring to his home and his life. God has given the husband the privilege and responsibility of leadership because he was made to be physically stronger to protect, provide and serve his family. His basic role in the home is to lead. God's basic command for him is to love. It is his nature to lead, and if he is stopped from this, he will become angry or bitter. It is easy for him, however to become mad or hurt over something his wife does, and to withdraw his love from her. If he gives up his responsibility or breaks God's basic command for him, he will bring trouble in his home and his life. (Eph. 5:23; Gen. 3:16)

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WIFE

The wife's responsibility is to submit herself to her own husband in the Lord. Her relationship is at the same time equal and unequal. She may be his equal as far as intellect, conscience, service, freedom and happiness is concerned; but she is not to take the reins of leadership in the home. It is not a question of superiority, but authority; she cannot effectively do a man's job under God, just as her husband cannot effectively do hers. One of the reasons for this law is her difference in make-up. A woman usually reacts more by her senses, rather than logic. God made her this way, with the capacity to experience, feel and enjoy so she could pass on her inspiration to her husband. She is usually better able to "sense out" an experience than a man; he is more matter-of-fact in his approach to life. Spiritually, she is often more able to see the whole picture than the man, but is not able to dissect and analyze its worth as well as her husband. This gift is both an advantage and a disadvantage. When protected from deception under the leadership of her husband, she is free to inspire and challenge him in ways he could never see without her. If she is left unguarded by his "spiritual umbrella" (see I Cor. 11:3-12) and assumes the false responsibility of implementing and approving her own discoveries, she is left tragically open to satanic or other forms of deception, leading both herself and her husband into danger. (Gen. 3:1 -6; I Tim. 2:11-14) For this reason, a woman fulfills her role in the home only when she makes it her ministry to inspire. God's basic command for the wife, to protect her against the temptation to try to implement her unchecked ideas is to submit to her husband's authority; to obey him. This safeguard, introduced after

the fall, is underlined right through the Bible. She is to submit in everything, (Eph. 5:24), except specific orders to sin. (Eph. 5:33; 1 Pet. 3:1, 2)

DANGER SIGNS

Before any other institution was ever introduced, God made the home. He established it before the church, before the school, before the government. Rich or poor, whatever our race, color, or nationality we call some place "home". It is the heart and core of every country and the very foundation of society. Because the home is a pattern of a spiritual reality, the main target of evil is the home. When God's pattern for the home is ruined, spiritual and moral destruction results. There exists today an anti-Christian pattern that, once established, accomplishes this decay. To understand it is to have the key to the vast majority of home conflicts. It begins as far back as the dawn of civilization, in the first non-Christian organized kingdom of Babylon. (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9)

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN HOME PATTERN

Ancient Babylon spawned a religion. Its immoral Queen became pregnant after the King died. To spare her position, she told the people that the King had supernaturally appeared to her and that the child she had would be a son, in reality, the "incarnation" of the King.

The Queen did bear a son, who was then worshipped as a god by the people. The real ruler ship was retained by the Queen, who used her husband's/son's authority.

The Bible describes this pattern of control as a master-spirit seeking to establish a world control in all areas of authority - business, religion, government, and family. (Rev. 14:8, 16:19, 17:1-6, 18; 18:1-8, 20-24)

God is totally opposed to this pattern, as it completely reverses His own Divine order of government. Once established, this evil spiritual force seeks to destroy or nullify God's control and order in the home. As time draws to a close, this pattern will become more and more evident. Is it in your home? The opening wedge is driven between the man and woman, in an attempt to split apart their home and their love. If the wife can be alienated from her husband, he will "die" to her life, and she will be driven to take an increasingly greater leadership in the home. This split is caused by many factors, but the end result is that the woman becomes the real leader in the family, not the man. God's basic family roles are reversed, His system of control is twisted, and the children learn obedience to their mother as final authority, rather than their father. The greatest damage is done to the children. The sons become mother-controlled, and lose their masculine leadership responsibilities under God; the mother may begin to transfer her affection from the alienated husband to the first-born son. Often, if the mother is domineering her son will become dictatorial; if the mother is possessive, he may become homosexual. In a religious family, the mother will be driven to imbue her first-born son with a messianic mission. Girls in the family learn how to "control" the men like their mother, ready to pass on the same system to the men they marry. The father of the house, sensing his loss of respect and control, may be driven to increasingly transfer his affection to his daughters, creating a whole new block of problems that will be again passed on to the next generation.

EFFECTS ON HUSBAND/WIFE

If the wife begins to yield to this spiritual pressure, she will become convinced that her husband is inadequate to direct the affairs of the family. She may increasingly picture her husband as a little boy who must be discreetly managed from behind the scenes. Often the control is open and aggressive; many times it is subtle and publicly invisible.

The husband, instinctively sensing his loss, usually reacts by withdrawing from his wife even further, and may react in violence, bitterness, sullenness, or aggression; he may try to drown his bitterness in drink or drugs; he may take refuge in business or hobbies, in an attempt to be boss somewhere. He may abandon his home responsibilities or even his family for good; often divorce seems his only answer. Every day, hundreds of thousands of homes are surrendering to this incredibly widespread and evil force. This is the power behind a vast majority- of the crime and corruption in civilization today. Look around you with open eyes. Babylon is still here, and it is everywhere! And only the power of God operating within His absolutely essential laws for human happiness in the family, can help you "stay in love"!

Your love-life can be a happy one! To successfully combat the pressures that have been able to destroy so many homes and divide so many marriages, you must follow God's laws for family responsibilities. Even if you have so far failed to make a success of staying in love, by God's help you can begin again. If you are not a Christian, your own unhappiness and the misery you have brought into the lives of others should be reason enough for you to be willing to allow Jesus Christ His rightful place as Leader and King of your life. If you are sorry for your failure to do what is right in His eyes, and you really mean to stop living for yourself, He will forgive you and help you. There is no happiness in a home that is not built upon His love and His leadership. Will you get on your knees right now and tell Him that you want to start again like a little child? Ask Him to forgive you and cleanse your heart from sin. Ask Him to come into your life and give you the power to be the kind of person you should be in your home. He will help you! Do it right now.

If you are already a Christian, His laws will not be hard for you to keep, because you love Him. (1 John 5:1-4) If your mate is not a Christian, you must pay even more special attention to God's behavioral laws, for if you faithfully do what He asks, there is the very strongest probability that they will also give their lives to God. It may be difficult to apply these laws if you have not done so before, and have acted wrong for a long time. But if you are willing, God will give you all the strength that is needed. (2 Cor. 8:12; Philippians 4:13, 19) If you are not willing to do what the God Who loves you asks for the highest happiness of your family and His families across the world, you are not yet a Christian and need to ask God to forgive you before anything in this article will be of any help to you. Ready? Men first!

1. HUSBANDS

(1) DON'T hold back your love! "Husbands, love your wives." (Eph. 5:25) You must love your wife as your own body, because in the sight of God you are both "one flesh". (Eph. 5:28a, 5:31) You must learn not to behave harshly or to become selfishly angry with your wife if she should fail, but be tender, gentle and kind in every trying situation. (Col. 3:19) If you want to be boss of your household, first learn to be boss of your own temper! Give your wife honor and consideration as the "weaker vessel". (1 Pet. 3:7) You may need to ask her forgiveness for your hateful temper. Swallow your stinking pride! If you call yourself child of God, your life should be marked by love. If you cannot learn to love your wife you do not really love God at all. (1 John 4:7-8) Give her your love at all costs.

This love will not always be a feeling of affection. There will be times was anything but affection for her, if she does something foolishly or unthinkingly. But love is not primarily a feeling, but a choice for the other's highest good. Get control of your feelings. Do that which is right. Learn to forgive "seventy times seven." (Matt. 18:21-22) If your wife begins to wrongly assert leadership, your reaction may very well be to withdraw your love from her to "teach her a lesson." You are under command to love her in this case if you need to reprove her, do it, but do it in love. Your first duty is to be Christ-like to your wife. This means you must not only be a man of prayer, a man of the Word of God, a man of the church, and a man of honesty and integrity, but you must be a man who shows Christ's love. Without it, your marriage will be doomed to failure.

LOVING YOUR WIFE

"Love your wives as Christ loved the church." (Eph. 5:25) What is the church? The church is a body of people who once did not care about God, who showed Him no love and gave Him no obedience. But He loved them into caring, and He loved them into obeying. He still pleads with His Bride when she, the church, is imperfect; He rebukes and chastens at times, but always in love. He loves and goes the limit, taking the guilt on Himself, for He can bear it when His Bride cannot. Do you have this love? If you do, you will not justify your actions by saying, "She did it first" or accuse your wife; "You started it, and I'm not going to say sorry until you do!" Christ always works to bring His Bride to see her faults and repent, and He is always there to help and begin the reconciliation. If you are going to be leader, begin by taking the leadership in asking forgiveness. Do not bury your head in the sand and sulk until she admits her faults! Take the lead; help her, by carrying the load of her faults. Forgive, be considerate, and thoughtfully, lovingly try to lead her to a better way of life. This love is described in 1 Corinthians, 13. Measure your love against this.

Perhaps your love is dead already. God is the God of the Resurrection! He can make your dead love live again: Hosea was God's man, but his wife was an adulteress. Hosea loved her so much that he brought her back from the slavery that her sins had sold her into. He would take her back, live with her, love her and plead with her to be faithful. He did this simply because he loved her and was concerned for her. He did everything he could to win her back. He did

not rush her to the divorce court. Read Hosea's story for an example. If you will be willing to act as if you loved her, God will give you the life you need. This is not pretence; it is obedience to Christ's commands. Begin your honeymoon all over again. Bring her presents, flowers. Take her out on a date again. Court her all over again. God can make your dead love flower into new life and restore it into full blossom!

"Love your wives as Christ loved... and *gave*". Christ's love for His church is expressed by giving. Billy Graham says, "Show your wife that you love her. Don't let her love be taken for granted; send her a box of candy once in a while. How long has it been since you sent some roses to your sweetheart...? Some of you husbands are inclined to be tightwads. Let your wife buy a new hat or a dress once in a while. Be a gentleman; be courteous; be thoughtful. Do the little things that you know women like. When a woman marries she loses much of her own life in that of her husband. Marriage is only a part of his life. But to a woman it is everything. Your wife gave up everything to come with you. Remember that and remember the marriage vows you took at the altar." (The Home God Honors)

(2) DON'T BE BOSSY or domineering, "For the husband is the head of the wife, ever, as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body." (Eph. 5:23) A husband's greatest temptation in asserting his leadership is to abuse his leadership and use it in imposing on his wife. Jesus is head of the church, but He is not bossy or domineering. He exercises authority without dictatorship. He voluntarily became a servant for us. (Phil. 2: 5-7) The Christian husband should seek likewise to serve his wife, not as a "hen-pecked" man but as unto the Lord. (Luke 6:38) He should be willing to work to earn her appreciation and respect. He should be as willing to offer his help to her, as he wants her to help him.

Many couples begin their married life with the attitude that there must make them happy and that it is the mate's duty to do so. They enter holy wedlock looking for something rather than with the intention of giving themselves to one another. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord". (Eph.5:21) This is the Lord's way. People who enter marriage with the attitude of getting instead of giving are quick to find fault with one another. Little things irritate and disturb them, such as personal habits, ways of speaking and mannerisms. These lead to quarrels and tension mounts while the divine pattern of 'love' is ignored."

CONSIDER YOUR CO-PARTNER

Husbands *must* treat their wives with consideration. Eph. 5:22 does not mean that you can treat your wife as you please without respect and care for her. Henry Brandt says, "The relationship between wife and husband can be likened to the relationship between the president and vice-president of a bank. Only one can be president; both carry heavy responsibilities. The vice-president knows the policies as well as the president. He helps make them, is in accord with them, and is limited in his decisions by them. He can step in and take over at any time and the bank will function as in the past... Freedom comes through submission and subjection to bank policies. It is a friendly, interdependent relationship. Occasionally, new circumstances arise. The president calls his first vice-president together to ponder the question. It is a serious moment when a meeting of the minds is not possible. Such an occurrence is rare, but when it comes, the president must make the final decision, not according to personal whim, but the best interest of the bank. Once the decision is made, everyone, including the president is bound by it. If later, the decision proves not to be in the best interest of the bank, it can be changed." (Balancing your Marriage p24)

DON'T BE BOSSY, BOSS!

Husband, you do not lead in a haughty, superior manner. This is not the Spirit of Christ; this is not meekness. (Eph. 5:22-26; 6:1-3) To lead your wife in love is to guard her own happiness and to plan her best interests under God. This is not slave-driving. Christ's leadership is one of tenderness, care and love; He sets an example and loves us in following it for Him. If you were your wife, would you want to obey yourself? If you want her to obey you, you must be the kind of man who is easy to obey. Your wife is of you, and if you love yourself and her, take care of her. (Eph. 5:28)

Don't abuse your wife physically. The Bible commands the husband to live considerately with his wife, giving her honor as the "weaker vessel." (1 Pet. 3:7) Men must not be harsh or bitter with their wives, but gentle, tender and kind in every circumstance. (Col. 3:19) This means self-restraint, especially in the area of sex. Christ is the "Savior of the body" (Eph.5:23) and your wife's submission to you is no excuse for undisciplined, selfish and unrestrained sexual promiscuity. Sexual love is to be a warmly-shared and tender privilege between you and your wife, not an occasion

for you to abuse her body as if she was nothing more than an object of gratification for your overindulgence. God makes no grounds for moral flabbiness, especially in marriage. Self-control is one of the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:23-24) If you cannot learn to bring your desires within sensible and considerate limits, you are in grave danger of giving in to temptation outside of marriage when domestic stress, long illness or marital "frigidity" in your mate, or separation for some time puts pressure on your morally feeble controls.

IT'S UP TO YOU

"Too often the moral downfall of men is blamed on some failure of their wives. That is a cowardly evasion of moral responsibility. The man of disciplined character does not have to have a warm, responsive wife who caters to his every impulse, to keep him in the path of virtue. He keeps himself there, by the grace of God. If his relationship with his wife is happy, he is grateful; if it is not, he simply appropriates more grace and demonstrates the man he is. A weak man is a poor risk however warm is his wife; a strong man, will keep himself pure even if it means total abstinence the rest of his life... Some marriages are less than ideal in their physical aspects. Some bodily or psychological impediment prevents the fulfillment of that romantic ideal... So what? Must there therefore be irritability and constant tension, and perpetual teetering on the brink of moral infidelity? ... Such conditions are often the rock on which the marriage is shattered. But they may also be the rock on which the marriage is built into a stronger and finer edifice. In these very problems the couple may find a deeper meaning of love and a truer, richer stability... The marriage is not just 'saved'; it is often stronger than marriages wherein there have been no deep struggles and decisive conquests." (The Disciplined Life; Richard Shelly Taylor)

The husband's greatest temptation to give in to the spiritual pressures bent on destroying his home is to withdraw his love from his wife under provocation. He may be persuaded that his wife does not love him, that she will be "just like" some other unfortunate female example in his family. But he does not dare give in, and withdraw into a selfish shell. "Love is never jealous, envious, haughty or proud... it is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly notice when others do it wrong." (I Cor. 13:4-7) In his tract, "Marriage Can Be Happy", Gordon L. Van Oostenburg writes, "When you feel neglected, feel that you have been overlooked or ignored, it only, reveals your lack of love. When you are so easily upset or disturbed about your partners mannerisms, it only reveals your lack of love. When you become suspicious and think evil of your mate, it only reveals your lack of love. When you feel you have 'gone far enough' and you are ready to quit, it only shows your lack of love. "Love never faileth." This is the secret. Love so that you expect nothing from your wife, but go all out to please your partner, always making it your aim to please her and to make her...happy. It is the only pattern for a Christian marriage."

Dr. Oswald J. Smith says, "There are two kinds of wives. There are those who love to demonstrate their affection. They meet you at the door, throw their arms around you and give you a welcoming kiss. They go to you of their own accord and crawl into your arms. If there is anything between, you they make it up at once. They are like a clinging vine, and they are priceless. They know just how to make you love them and to make you happy. Then there are the other kind. They are reserved. You have to take the initiative. They may love you deeply, more deeply than the first, but though they express their affection for you in their letters, they do not show it when they are with you. If there are any misunderstandings, they just suffer and wait until you make up. Their love is true, but undemonstrative. You will have to go more than halfway if you want to be happy. They have much to give, but they do not know how to give it, and you must teach them. You must win them. You must go the second mile. They may even resist you. Their response may be disappointing. But it will pay you to persevere." (How To Win Your Family To Christ)

(3) *Don't* abdicate your responsibility. True leadership is a labor of love. (I Cor. 13:4-7) Man was made to lead, provide, and defend. He was made physically stronger to protect and care for his wife. To do this he must stick to his task. It is not easy to be a leader. It is by far easier to give up when things get tough and leave things to his wife when she was not designed to bear such a burden.

"In a home, the husband is responsible for the family. He should have the total picture in mind; financing, training, housing, planning for the future. He must depend heavily on his wife for carrying out the details. To do this, he may need to delegate much of his responsibility to her. At times he must act decisively when a difficult decision is up to him. The husband has the responsibility of setting godly standards for the home and leading the way up to them himself, just as Jesus set the standard for His followers. (John 14:15) A husband should rule his household according to the best interests of his wife and family.

"You, husband, are to be the kind of man that is dedicated under God to your wife and family even to death. (Eph. 5:25b) Your duties are:

- (A) DIRECTIONAL - As the head directs the body, so you are responsible to God to lead the affairs of your family. Make it a family rule, that after careful, prayerful discussion together, if husband and wife cannot agree, it will be the husband's decision that will carry. God will hold you responsible for your family management, not your wife.
- (B) PROVISIONAL - You must make adequate provision for, your family. The first share of your earnings must go to your household, for God holds you responsible for their well-being and care. You have no right to force your wife into taking care of financial provision for the house, while you spend your earnings on self-gratification. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." (I Tim. 5:8) If you fit into this category, you had better take steps to set this situation right, for you are in a bad place with God.
- (C) CHIVALRIC (I Pet. 3:7) - This society needs a rebirth of chivalry; men need to study and practice it, and women should expect it and ask for it. Opening doors for the wife, allowing her to enter first, showing simple courtesy and honor is all too often simply neglected by the husband. Wives are usually generous in understanding, but they do not want to have to "understand" too many things especially neglect.
- (D) SPIRITUAL - The husband has a home responsibility to lead the house in prayer, family devotions and worship. This leadership does not come out of half-hearted directions to do this out of a sense of duty. Keith Miller says, "If you want your children to read the Bible and pray someday, get up and do these things yourself - because you want to. They'll know if you are really interested or just doing it out of a sense of duty." (A Second Touch - p. 39) "A husband's job is to be head of the house in religious matters. If you don't have a family worship at home, it is the husband's fault. If you don't have prayer in your home, table grace and family worship you ought to be ashamed of yourself for your sin against God. It will make all the difference in the world. Every problem you face in the family will be solved if you pray together." (Billy Graham) The husband should be in the forefront of spiritual interest, devotion, and cultivation. If anyone in the home has to urge another to go to church, it should be the husband. He is the head, as Christ is the head of the church, and should busy himself with his duties rather than talk about his rights.

2. Wives

(1) STAY HOME where you belong. (Tit. 2:4-5) Being a wife and a mother is a fulltime job. Whenever possible, the wife must spend the majority of her time with her home and her children. Some women spend all their time away from home simply to escape their God-given responsibilities. Others will get involved in business careers God never gave them, so they can boss their own lives and not be dependent on -heir husbands. There is no greater possible danger of them losing their family love. Wife, did God call you to the work you are doing outside of your home? It will be easy to justify your actions by complaining, that your husband does not make enough money to "keep up with the Joneses." You can buy a whole house full of new carpet and still lose your children and your husband in the process. You may build a wide circle of social friends, but if you fail in your home responsibilities, you have failed the most basic test of your womanhood.

Be willing to learn from older Christian women. (Tit. 2:4) This is a further test of your submission. They can teach you to "love your husband, love your children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good; obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed." To properly honor and appreciate contributions from older women of God who have learned from the school of time is a way for young wives to save themselves from many foolish steps and possible heartaches. Perhaps the greatest lesson they can teach you is the importance of your role in the home.

You, as a woman have a basically different make-up than your husband. Your body is different; you cannot do the rough hard labor that is required of many men. God never intended you to. Your mental attitude is basically different. Men are usually naturally aggressive - leaders. You have been made to follow in love. All being considered, you are usually higher in personal qualities than your husband; because God made you for your man to be proud of you. You are made to be more patient, understanding. You are able to stand greater hardship, difficulty and pain. You can comfort and sympathize better, and are more even-tempered. Do not try to do a man's job, in a man's way. You will only succeed in cheapening the qualities that set you apart, coarsen the things that make you most beautiful, and

grieve God. You cannot attempt to act like a man without losing the very things that make you uniquely different, and better suited for your own work than him.

(2) **STAY IN SUBMISSION** as a Christian. (Eph.5:22) Giving in to God as a sinner is often hard, and a direct parallel exists in your need for surrender to your husband's leadership. If God begins to plead with you in love for the rights of your life, you may try to put Him off and convince yourself that surrender to Him would leave life dull, tasteless and frustrating. But if you finally surrender to His loving control, what a surprise awaits!

All things become new; your whole attitude changes completely. The old, rebellious life of self-dependency seems like slavery in contrast to the new joy, peace, contentment, and serenity His care and watchful protection brings you. You become free for the first time to be what you were meant to be. Just so is the way of submission to your husband's leadership. Without this surrender, the few selfish "kicks" you get out of "wearing the pants" in the family will lose their luster and leave you bitter and disappointed. How much more lovely is the wonderful way of God! (Heb. 13:17; Jas. 3:17-18) If your husband is not a Christian, do not despair. You are still to submit in his leadership, in everything (Eph. 5:24) except direct, specific commands to commit sin. In this case, you are under higher law (Acts 5:29; Mark 12:28-31) and must not follow him into sin. This is not applicable in cases where you feel "God would have me do this" without specific direction from the Word of God. God will show you ways around your husband's directions that involve compromise without actual transgression, so you will be able to turn these into a chance to witness or some other work for Christ. If you feel God wants you to do something, but have been ordered not to by your husband, use Prov. 21:1 and pray, "Lord, I think You want me to do this, but my husband will not allow it. If You do, then You must change my husband's mind, because You have asked me to submit to his authority." Under no circumstances are you to over-rule his authority simply because you are a "Christian" and he is not. You will not be part of God's answer in your home, but part of His problem. God never breaks one of His basic laws so that He can fulfill another. Go the way of loving submission. (Rm.13)

WINNING YOUR UNSAVED HUSBAND

Dr. J. C. Brumfield gives some sage advice to help you win your husband to Christ using I Pet. 3:1-6. "The wife can win her husband to the Lord if she meets God's conditions. He gives directions affecting three things - attitude, appearance, and adornment... the body, the soul, and the spirit. I Pet. 3:1 is a direct reference to I Pet. 2:18 where servants are asked to be subject to their master. Wives are to practice this same obedience with their husbands. If the wife finds herself married to an ungodly or even a cruel husband, she is to bear her suffering just as Christ did, trusting God to take care of injustice suffered. (cf. I Pet. 2:18b)

"I have the utmost sympathy for the woman who has to live with an ungodly man. Her love has been betrayed, her romance has faded, her dreams have vanished, her hopes are shattered and her heart is broken. My purpose is to help you claim God's promise and win your husband to the Savior. To do this, I must speak frankly; some things I am going to say may hurt. God requires you to be in subjection to your own husband, not some stranger! (I Cor. 11:8-10; I Tim. 2:11-14; Eph. 5:23, 30) Every time the word of God uses 'obey' a special Greek word meaning "one's own dear husband" is used.

"Be in subjection to 'your own dear husband.' That is not unreasonable is it? Of all men, you have chosen him to be your life companion, to share sorrow and happiness, to be the father of your children, to be the protector of your home and provider of your needs. You left father and mother ... to live with him in preference to all other men. God gives a wonderful promise to the faithful, loving, submissive wife. They may (oldest manuscripts 'shall') be won. God is saying that if you carry out his directions, your husband 'shall' be won. The word conversation does not mean 'much talking'... but the behavior, manner of living, and the conduct of the Christian wife. A nagging, irritable, complaining, careless, unpleasant woman will never win her unsaved husband to Christ... You preach to him that Jesus can free him from his sins, help him overcome drinking, swearing and the use of tobacco; but unless you show him that Jesus can cure that temper of yours, your tongue and disposition, your words will have little effect on him.

"The second condition has to do with appearance. Nowhere does the Bible condemn a wife for being clean, neat, and attractive. I suggest very kindly that if some women spent about ten minutes looking in the mirror, they might discover why their husbands do not make love to them any longer. There seems to be some connection between

cleanliness and godliness, which some Christian women have not discovered.... Christian women should not cheapen their appearance by gaudy ornaments and worldly attire in order to attract attention. But nowhere does He condemn a woman for making the best of her personal appearance in order to hold the love and admiration of her husband. Mere outward adorning however is not the only way. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit will reach his heart. A meek, spirit does not create a disturbance, is not officious or 'bossy'. A quiet spirit is one, which bears with patience the disturbance caused by others, and is gentle in word and action.

"Be careful that your desire to win your husband is prompted by the proper motive; the glory of God. Many sincere Christian wives want their husbands saved so that their lives will be happier and their homes more peaceful. Because they have a selfish motive, God has not answered their prayers. Ask God to give you a concern for the soul of your husband, that whatever it might cost you in sacrifice or suffering, his soul might be saved for the Lord's glory. "When your husband comes home this evening, meet him with a smile. Have your hair done, and a clean, becoming dress on. Try to look just like you used to when he came to take you out on a date. Be sure the house is spick-and-span and homey-looking. Have an appetizing meal on the table; serve his favorite dish. Be sweet, kind, cheerful, soft-spoken, and submissive to him. He may faint; but when he recovers, he will like it. If you continue to act in this way, according to God's promises, your husband will be won to the Lord."

(3) Give him *love* at all costs. (Titus 2:4) In too many marriages, no "hugs" can break down the invisible wall of reserve and reproach. Get on your knees and ask God's forgiveness for your self-pity and critical attitude. Only Christ's love can break down the walls and bind your hearts together again. Men are won to Christ by Mary's, not Martha's. Oswald Smith comments, "Take time to express your love. Give him a chance to enjoy your affection. Go to him often. Make love to him even if he is old. Be so indispensable that he will never even think of anyone else. " This includes physical love. (I Cor. 7:1-5) The sexual relation is holy even if the wife has an unbelieving husband. The wife's body belongs to her husband; one purpose of sexual union is to avoid fornication. (I Cor. 7:2) If the wife tries to defraud her husband out of a spirit of spite, or to show disapproval of something he has done, she runs the risk of losing a husband to some other girl who gives him cause to be tempted. This is specifically forbidden in Scripture. "Do not cheat each other of sexual intercourse, unless, of course, you both decide to abstain temporarily, to make special opportunity for fasting and prayer. " (I Cor. 7:5, Phillips)

Resist the temptation to goad, manipulate or "nag" him. Don't undercut his leadership by taking sides with the children against him. Stop comparing him with someone else's man. Above all stubbornly deal with the sin of self-pity. Love is your only necessary weapon and defense and you must draw on Christ to be able to use it consistently and sincerely. "If you love someone, you will be loyal to him, no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him. All special gifts and powers from God will one day come to an end, but love goes on forever." (I Corinthians 13:7-8a; Living Letters) God help you to, "stay in love!"

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