

marriage in the form of financial worries and other problems, but if the wife lives in the security of being *nourished* (tenderly looked after) and *cherished* (held to his heart as a precious treasure) she will return that love and faithfulness. It is a fundamental truth that what every woman needs for happiness is to know without doubt that she is loved.

And how much is her husband to love her? As Christ loved the church — enough to die for her, if that is required. What a challenge to husbands! But unreserved, dedicated love is the necessary factor for success in marriage and in life.

What Is Involved in This Type of Love?

- ◆ Honesty in all things.
- ◆ Selflessness — putting her before self.
- ◆ Observance of moods and needs.
- ◆ Consideration: thoughtfulness; tenderness.
- ◆ Integrity — being honorable in all things.
- ◆ Industry — no room for laziness.
- ◆ Patience — Practice waiting and toleration.
- ◆ Perseverance — Press on to goals together.
- ◆ Commitment — for life, regardless.
- ◆ Prayerfulness — talk with God first.
- ◆ Spiritual leadership — the first priority.

That seems to be a long list, but, men, you don't have to worry about it at all. The entire

list is covered, as Jesus said: *on the commandment of love hangs all the law and the prophets* (Matthew 22:40), and this was the all-encompassing command to His followers (John 15:12). If love of God, first, and love of wife, second, is the motivation that shapes your outlook, your thoughts, your behavior, and your focus, then you will be the happiest of husbands and your wife will be the envy of all of her friends!

The beautiful thing about following God's rules is that they work so well! After all, He designed man, He designed woman, He designed marriage, and He designed the home. Isn't it logical that He would know exactly what would be required for everything to work well? Incorporated in His book — the Bible — are all of the instructions for the operation of His creations. Our work is to learn and obey.

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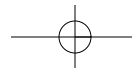
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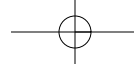
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Husbands!

Betty Burton Choate





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In today's world, the mental image of what a husband is, and should be, has gotten very muddled because people are looking through the glasses of the culture that surrounds them. That can be a dangerous thing. Satan, who is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), has blinded the eyes of the masses and distorted what God intended husbands to be.

Historically, particularly in the Greco-Roman world before the advent of the influence of Christianity, the man of the household had total authority over those who lived in his house. According to research reported in the book, **Under the Influence**, a wife, a child, or a slave could be put to death without legal recrimination. They were literally the property of the husband, and he could do as he chose with them. Abortion, infanticide, child abandonment, and sacrifices of babies to the "gods" were common practices, supported and usually forced by the husband of the house. Adultery with mistresses and prostitutes, male and female, were part of the accepted culture.

Sadly, many of these practices have continued through the years in pagan cultures. And, as

western culture has turned further and further from God, it is making the full cycle back to the barbaric practices of a godless world. Are not suicide, abortion, prostitution, homosexuality, pedophilia, adultery, and countless other evils commonly accepted behavior today?

This is not the way God intended the world to be. It is not the way He intended husbands and men to be.

From the Beginning

We have some meaningful passages in Scripture that help us to know what God wants. The first picture of a husband is in Genesis 2:23,24: "And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

What purity and beauty! Eve was not made of dust, as Adam had been. Instead, God took a part of Adam's own body so that the realization of oneness in marriage would be a natural thing. Eve *was* a part of her husband. Not only did she belong to him because God had given her to him, and not only had she been made from Adam himself, but her body and emotions were

designed to be the completion of her husband in every way. God's plan for this family unit of husband and wife was that they were to leave the security of parental oversight and to live as one — one flesh.

The Picture in the New Testament

"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 ... For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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." (Ephesians 5:25,28-31).

Could a stronger picture of love and devotion be drawn for the Christian husband than to actually require that he pattern his relationship with his wife after the relationship of Christ with His bride, the church?

Practical Application

What is Christ's example for the husband? That he *nourish* and *cherish* his wife. These two words are critical keys to the happiness in any marriage. There may be many personality differences, there may be many challenges to the

