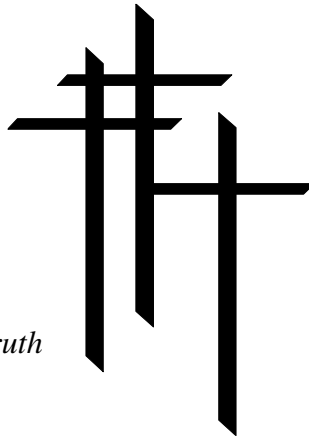


Timely Messenger

*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*

Volume 65 No. 2

February 2005



UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE

By Gregg Bing

Continued from last month

*“Unless the LORD
builds the house, they
labor in vain who build
it...” (Psalm 127:1)*



In this series, we have been looking at God’s principles for building a godly home or family as found in Colossians 3:18-21. Last month we saw that wives are instructed by God: “submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” God has declared that the husband is the head of the wife; he is to be the spiritual leader of the family, and the wife is to recognize his God-given role and submit to his authority in their home. This being the case, we might expect the prime responsibility of the husband to be to

“rule well” over his wife and family, but this is not what God had Paul stress in his letter to the Colossians.

Husbands — Love Your Wives

“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter toward them.” (Col. 3:19)

The husband’s primary responsibility is to love his wife. The question is, What kind of love does God have in mind? There are four different Greek words for love: *eros*, *storge*, *phileo*, and *agape*.

Eros is the word for sensual or physical love. It describes having a passion for something, most often to satisfy one’s own desires. This is what the world often views as “love.” This word is not used in the New Testament.

Storge is the word for affection, especially between close family members, such as parents and children. This word is also not found in the New Testament.

Phileo is a more general word for affection which includes, but is not limited to, family members. It describes a tender affection for someone else. It is often used to speak of love between friends. This word is used in the New Testament in several different ways. Paul uses it in Titus 2:4 of a young woman's love for her husband and children.

Agape is the highest form of love, unconditional love for another. It is not a result of passion or desire, but is a willful choice on one's part. Though used sparingly in secular Greek literature, the word *agape* was raised to a whole new level through the Holy Spirit's use of it in the New Testament. Consider this passage from 1 John 4.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten

Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:7-11)

Agape love originates with God for "love is of God." No one can love in this way unless they are born of God and know God, because, in fact, "God is love."

Agape love is a giving love. God so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son for us (John 3:16). God "sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him," but God also sent Him to the cross, "to be the propitiation for our sins." What an "incredible gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15).

Agape love is also unconditional. God did not sacrifice His Son for us because we loved Him. In fact, we did nothing deserving of God's love. God gave His Son to die for us even while we were miser-

able, helpless sinners (Rom. 5:6-8).

Which of these types of love are husbands to have for their wives? Certainly physical or sexual love (Gr. eros) is an important part of a marriage (Gen. 2:24). In addition, genuine affection (Gr. phileo) and real friendship is a vital part of the relationship between husband and wife. However, the type of love that really holds a marriage together is the willful choice to love your spouse unconditionally (Gr. agape). This is the type of love husbands are admonished to have for their wives.

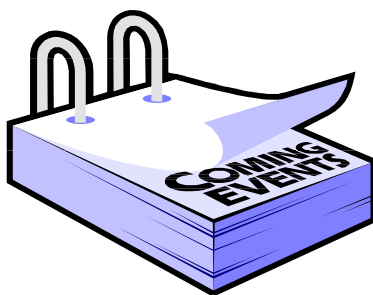
Love Your Wife As Christ Loved the Church

Often, the best way to understand this type of love is to look at an example. Paul gives husbands the greatest example of all in Ephesians 5.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the

word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:25-27)

Husbands are to love their wives “just as Christ also loved the church.” How did Christ love the church? “He gave Himself for it.” The Lord Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to give His life for us. He humbly subjected Himself to the will of His Father (Phil. 2:5-8) and was delivered into the hands of wicked men (Luke 24:7) who abused Him, shamed Him, and then cruelly crucified Him on the cross of Calvary. Why would Christ be willing to endure such sufferings? He loved us and desired to have a close, personal relationship with us, but He knew that He must first “sanctify and cleanse us” from our sins. The only way this could happen was through His death on the cross for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Christ gave His
(Continued on page 6)



MINERAL WELLS ANNIVERSARY

March 6, 2005

Pastor R.B. Shiflet and the Eleventh Avenue Church in Mineral Wells will celebrate 55 years of service to the Lord as a local church on Sunday, March 6, 2005 with special services at 10, 11 A.M., lunch at Noon, and a service at 2 P.M.

ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

March 18-20, 2005

Our Annual Bible Conference will be March 18-20 this year at Grace Bible Church in Fort Worth. The theme will be: “Our Wonderful Lord.” Make your plans now to be with us for these special services.

Timely Messenger

Published monthly by:

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11:00 AM Morning Worship
6:00 PM Evening Worship

Mid-Week Services:

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Wed. 7:00 PM Bible Study

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*Thanks for your help
in this matter!*

For the Ladies

by Beverly Wages



God So Loved

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16-18)

Some scriptures in the Bible are directed to men; some are directed to women. However most scripture is directed to everyone—to whosoever. When the plan of salvation

is given in the scriptures above, it is directed to everyone. The reason for this is that we all, men and women, are sinners and need to be saved. In Romans 3:23 we read,

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

Because we have all sinned, we come short of His glory and must be saved. As we see in the scriptures that are given at the beginning of this lesson, Christ died in our place. He gives us salvation as a free gift. We must accept this free gift, and we will be saved, and have access to heaven. Since we all are sinners, we cannot pay this debt. It took Christ, who had no sin, to pay this debt for us.

The last Scripture given in the introduction, John 3:18, tells us why we are

not saved. The last part says, “... because he has not believed in the name of the only Begotten Son of God.” Condemnation comes because we don’t believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He died and paid the penalty for us.

As women, we usually have every desire to help our children and raise them in a way that will bring a good life for them. This can only be done if we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, and then we can tell our children about our Wonderful Lord who is our Saviour. We do this by what we talk to them about. Mostly we teach them by how we live in front of them as we raise them. The most important thing then is that we believe and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. Then He will lead, guide and help us in knowing how to live for Him and how we can help others.

If you haven’t received the Lord Jesus as Saviour, I pray that you will accept Him into your heart and life and let Him control each day and help you as you grow spiritually.

The Lord willing, we will have more next month “For the Ladies,” and we hope you will join us in this short study each month.

FINALLY BRETHREN

By Charles Wages

“Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith. But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” (2 Thess. 3:1-5)

The Apostle Paul uses the expression “Finally brethren” in his

epistles to draw a conclusion to a particular matter of great importance. This is “the rest of the matter” until further instructions are given. These “finalities” are of great importance to all of us as believers. What is the first of these admonitions? “Pray for us.”

This was his first and most needed request of the Thessalonian believers. This request was not for personal reasons, but for particular premises in the work of the Lord. The pre-eminent result was “that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.” This showed there were people of this nature in Paul’s time. The amount and intensity of such men is prevalent in “our times” as well. Why were these people so unreasonable and wicked? The answer is forthcoming: “For all men have not faith!” Even today, there are some who have “faith,” but are not “faithful men.”

It is wonderful that we are told: “the Lord is faithful”. However, we must be faithful to his Word. We are told in this passage of Scripture that “the word of

the Lord may have free course and may be glorified, even as it is with you, and that you might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.” God’s preservation is amply seen in 2 Thessalonians 3:3, where we are told: “But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.”

The “finalities” of these wonderful portions of Scripture is found in, “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2 Thess. 3:5).

Remember Paul’s admonition, “Finally brethren, PRAY FOR US!”

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
— Colossians 4:2-3

(Continued from page 3)
life for our sins, “that He might present us to Himself.” Husbands are to have this type of love and care for their wives. Husbands cannot cleanse their wives from their sins; only Christ could do that. Husbands can and should love their wives unconditionally, being willing to give of themselves to provide for the needs of their wives, especially their spiritual needs.

Love Your Wife as Your Own Body

Christ loved the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). Just as Christ loved His body, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies.

“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.” (Eph. 5:28-29)

“He who loves his wife loves himself.” To some

this seems a strange statement, but it follows because when a man and wife are joined together in marriage, they “become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). The husband is to love and care for his wife as he does his own body, for she is truly now part of him. This type of love and care is demonstrated in two ways: nourishing and cherishing.

Husbands are to **nourish** their wives. This word *nourish* basically means to feed, however, it also carries the idea of supplying one’s needs. The husband is to supply the needs of his wife. While this may involve financially providing for her physical needs (food, clothing, shelter, etc.), she has other needs which are even more important. The husband is to nourish his wife mentally, emotionally, and spiritually as well. A husband is to be more than just a “breadwinner;” he is to be the spiritual head of the household. While the wife is still an individual with her own personal relationship with the Lord, the husband is to set an example and provide leadership for their home in

the areas of prayer, Bible study, worship, and spiritual growth. He is to care for her needs as much as he does his own.

Husbands are also to **cherish** their wives. The word *cherish* means literally “to keep warm.” It is used in the Septuagint (Greek) version of Deuteronomy 22:6 to describe a mother bird covering and warming her young. To cherish is thus to lovingly care for and protect; to provide safety and security. The husband is to provide this warm, tender, protective care for his wife. She should feel secure in his love, not only from physical danger or harm, but, even more so, from spiritual danger to their family.

Do Not Be Bitter Toward Your Wife

In the last half of Colossians 3:19, Paul admonishes husbands not to “be (or become) bitter toward” their wives. The word *bitter* refers to the husband’s attitude toward his wife. While a husband might occasionally be irritated or even angry with his wife,

he is not to become bitter toward her, to be left with a constant bitter taste in his mouth (or stomach) toward her. When a husband has this type of feeling toward his wife, he will usually deal harshly with her. The Apostle Peter, in his letter to the Jews of the dispersion, addresses the issue of a husband's attitude toward his wife.

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)

Peter instructs husbands to dwell with their wives with understanding. The word *understanding* is from the Greek word *gnosis* which means knowledge. The use of this word stresses the importance of a husband seeking to know and understand his wife. Though husband and wife become “one flesh” in marriage, their relationship must grow and develop as they live together. It is in-

teresting that in the Old Testament Scriptures, the word used to describe sexual intimacy between a husband and wife is the word “know” (cf. Gen. 4:1—“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain.”). The use of the word *know* implies that husband and wife share more than just physical intimacy. There is a mental, emotional, and spiritual intimacy that develops as well. A husband needs to make a real, concentrated effort to know and understand his wife's needs in all these areas.

Peter also focuses on the importance of husbands “giving honor” to their wives. The word *honor* literally refers to the price or cost of something, that is, its value or worth. Husbands are to recognize the great value that is found in their wives. Proverbs 18:22 declares:

“He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.”

A godly wife is a great blessing from the Lord, one

that a husband should value as such and thus give honor to. Some argue that women are weaker than men, are subservient to men, and are thus less important to God. None of these are Scriptural ideas. Peter does indicate that women are the “weaker vessels.” While this may be true of women physically, this in no way diminishes the value of their role and importance to God.

Peter speaks of wives as being “heirs together (with their husbands) of the grace of life.” The expression “heirs together” means that they share equally with their husbands in the inheritance, as believers, of “the grace of life.” A husband who does not recognize the value of his wife and honor her as God does, will find his own spiritual life and growth hindered.

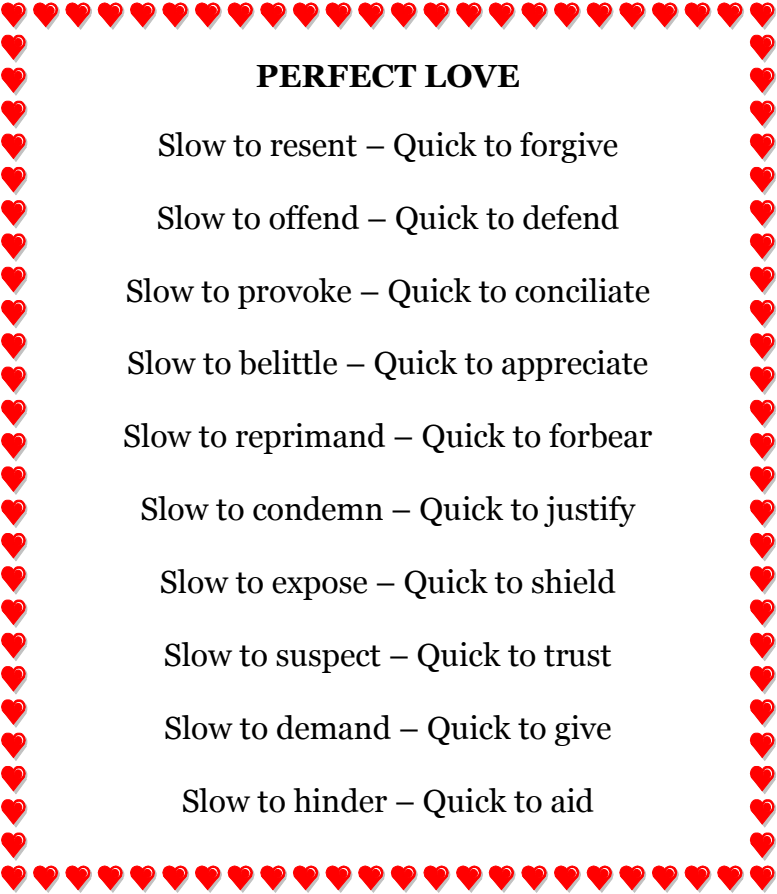
Conclusion

Though the Scriptures plainly teach that the husband is the head of his wife, this is not a position of great power or privilege, as some mistakenly believe, but one of tremen-

dous responsibility. The husband is to be the spiritual head of his family. He is to supply the needs of his family, providing protection and security for them, not just physically, but spiritually. The number one priority of the husband is to love his wife, unconditionally, just as Christ loved the church, just as a man loves his own body. This is what he is bound by God to do. This is his duty, certainly to his wife, but more importantly, this is his duty to God.

Next month we will look at the responsibility children have to their parents.

Continued next month.



PERFECT LOVE

Slow to resent – Quick to forgive

Slow to offend – Quick to defend

Slow to provoke – Quick to conciliate

Slow to belittle – Quick to appreciate

Slow to reprimand – Quick to forbear

Slow to condemn – Quick to justify

Slow to expose – Quick to shield

Slow to suspect – Quick to trust

Slow to demand – Quick to give

Slow to hinder – Quick to aid

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