

How to Improve as a Husband

Ephesians 5:23-33

Disclaimer: The following are Dr. Jeff Stott's sermon notes and manuscript. They have not been carefully proofed for spelling or grammar. All Scripture quotes are from the New International Version unless noted.

Take your Bibles and open them to Ephesians 5:23.

There was a man on a beach. He picked up something that looked like a jar. He started rubbing it to clean it off and a genie appeared.

The genie said, "I will grant you one wish." The man, standing on the beach said, "I wish I could go to Hawaii. However, I don't want to fly because I'm afraid of heights and I don't want to go by ship because I'll get sea sick. So, build me a road all the way from this beach to Hawaii. The genie thought for a moment and said, "I can't do that. It's too hard. It's too difficult. The water is too deep to put supports on the road. You're asking me to do an impossible task." The genie then asked, "Do you have any other wish?"

The man thought, "Well, I wish that you would give me the ability to understand my wife."

The genie stared at him with the look of deep thought on his face and then asked, "Is that two lanes or four lanes you want?"

Men, sometimes it may seem easier to build a road to Hawaii than it is to understand your wife. But, let me say this, God is more concerned about you *loving* your wife than He is about you *understanding* your wife.

In Ephesians 5 we discover four basic instructions about how you are to love and care for your wife. If you want to improve as a husband learn the Biblical principles in this passage. Learn how to love your wife as God intended. God wants you to reach your potential as a husband. This passage will help you do just that.

Intro to “Slow Fade”

Marriages don't fall apart over night. The emotional detachment and mental separation begins and happens gradually. It is a slow fade. With that said I want you to bring your attention to the screen.

Let me give you four Biblical thoughts about how to improve as a husband and to avoid the slow fades.

1. Spiritual leadership: You are to guide your family spiritually.

The first principle deals with spiritual leadership. God has given you the responsibility to guide your family spiritually. **Ephesians 5:23** says, “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church...” The husband is described as the head. The head gives direction and leadership to the body. The idea behind this verse is the husband is to give direction and leadership to his wife and family.

According to **1 Corinthians 14** your wife should be able to come to you with spiritual questions, theological questions, and life questions.¹ You should be her spiritual coach, counselor and advisor. You are the spiritual leader of the home. This implies that you are in the Word and growing in it. You are understanding the truths of it along with its applications and implications.

You not only are supposed to be a spiritual leader for your wife, but you are to be a spiritual leader for your kids as well. **Ephesians 6:4** says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” This implies that you know the Lord and you are growing in His Word. You are going to teach or instruct them regarding the Word and then you are going to train or show them how to live it out. While they are in your home you are their spiritual trainer and their spiritual professor.

As a husband you are your family's spiritual coach, advisor, guide, trainer, and professor. In your family you are to be the spiritual expert. God's design for you is that you be the head of the home, the leader and the initiator of the spiritual growth, development and direction of your family. You can do this. God has given you His Spirit inside you to help you and the Word of God to guide you.

¹ 1 Corinthians 14:33-35, “As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home...”

2. Sacrificial love: You are to devote your life to your wife.

The second principle for you as a husband deals with sacrificial love. You are to devote your life to your wife. **Ephesians 5:25** says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...” Your example of how you are to love your wife is how Jesus loved the church. How does Christ love the church? First, “He gave Himself up for her.” That’s referring to the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross so that sinners like you and me can be saved. So if a husband’s love for his wife is to be like Christ’s love for the church, we could say that his life should be a cruciform – in the shape of a cross.

Now most men don’t want to hear about crosses and sacrifices. We want to hear about how we’re supposed to be wearing a crown as the king of our castle. Although most men want to talk about the glory and authority they should have as the head of the home, the first thing God wants to know about you as a husband is this: When your wife looks at you, does she see a cross? Does she see a man who sacrifices himself and gives up himself for her? As a husband do you give up your agenda, plans, and desires for your wife. Do you crucify your life daily for your wife’s benefit?

If I gave your wife a piece of paper and asked her to list what you have given up that’s of value to you because of what she needs, desires, or cherishes, how long would her list be? If I asked her in what ways you have adjusted your plans and schedule in the past month because you saw that she had a burden or a need you could help meet, would she be able to recall such times? Your sacrifice should be visible. Your wife should be able to see it. Just as people were able to see Jesus hanging on that cross, your wife should be able to see you sacrificing for her.

3. Sanctifying love: You are to help your wife reach her potential.

The third principle for you as a husband deals with sanctifying love. You are to help your wife reach her potential. You are to help her succeed. **Ephesians 5:25** says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (26) to make her holy, cleansing 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.” One of the things that Jesus does for us is to sanctify us. He helps us to grow. The goal of sanctification is to change us from something we are into something we ought to be, so that we think differently, act differently, walk differently, talk differently, behave differently, and react differently... becoming more

and more like Christ. The Lord is working in your life to make you holy and cleansing you of old habits that came from your old nature.

There are a lot of implications here for the husband but let me point out one: The husband is to function as his wife's pastor.

You are the pastor or shepherd of your home. It is your responsibility to help your wife grow spiritually and become the person God created her to be. One of the ways you do that is to cleanse her through the Word of God. What does that mean? What does that look like? When your wife has a question or wants to know something, the first pastor she should turn to is not the pastor in the pulpit, but the pastor shepherding her own home. She should have her private pastor she can go to any time, a shepherd who knows how to open up the Word and minister to his family. Christian husband, you are the pastor of your home.

So let me ask you some questions. How many times a week do you talk about the Word and pray with your wife? Do you know the needs and burdens that are important to your wife? Can you open the Word and apply its truth to the situations your family faces? If your wife were to need guidance or spiritual insight, would she have to skip over you and go outside the home to find someone in tune with God?

I know these are convicting questions, but they're unavoidable because we are talking about what it means to be a husband who loves his wife and wants to help her become holy and to see her life cleansed or changed by the Word of God. Husband you need to see yourself as the pastor of your home and the one who God is going to work through to sanctify that home.

4. Sensitive love: You are to care for your wife's needs.

A final principle for you as a husband deals with sensitive love. You are to care for your wife's needs. **Ephesians 5:28** says, "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 his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church."

The word "feeds" means to *nourish*. To nourish a wife is to provide for her needs, to give that which helps her grow and mature in the things of God and in life.

The word “cares” means *tender love*. To care for your wife is to use tender love and physical affection to give her comfort, protection and security.

A husband who shows sensitive love encourages, hugs, listens, gives, talks and prays for his wife. In your presence your wife should find safety, security, and satisfaction.

Conclusion

Today I have given you four things to seriously consider as a husband.

- You are to be the **spiritual leader** of your home. You are the coach, counselor and advisor. Take your family from point A to point B. Lead them.
- You are to demonstrate a **sacrificial love** for your wife. She needs to know and see that her husband has, is, and will give up his agenda, his plans, and his hobbies for her. She needs to know that you are devoted to her.
- You are to demonstrate a **sanctifying love** and be the pastor of your home. Pray for your family, teach God’s Word to your family, and give your family Biblical advice. You shepherd and oversee your family with God’s Word.
- You are to express a **sensitive love** toward your wife that feeds and cares for her mind, soul, and body.

Before we wrap this up I want to say a word to the wives. Ladies, if your husband falls way short of what has been mentioned here today don’t criticize him or nag him about becoming better. If he was here today, he heard what I said and he saw what the Bible says. You pray for him, encourage him, be his cheerleader and his help mate.

I realize the husbands here today want to be better husbands. They want to love their wife better. They want to lead their families better. They want to honor God in their homes more.

To become the man God wants you to be and to become the husband and dad God wants you to be you need to have Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life. He needs to be your Lord so He can be your leader. You need to have His Spirit inside of you [Explain salvation].