

Love is the Goal

A Study of 1 Corinthians 13 in Marriage

From "The Marriage Enrichment Book"

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Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

EPHESIANS 5:25

The Bible plainly says the man is the head of his home. What does that mean? It can seem very intimidating and even unfair for a married couple. Does it mean that the man gets to make all the decisions? Does it mean that the woman must do every thing her husband says? What does it mean? When you see the biblical picture of headship, you will be amazed and thankful for God's order of creation in marriage. The biblical equation of headship looks something like this:

HEADSHIP = LOVE

Immediately we see that there is confusion about headship. Ask the average man what headship means to them, and he will suggest words like: power, authority, control, or leadership. The Bible uses a different word to describe headship: love! You will exercise your leadership, authority, etc., through your love. Strip authority of love and you have a monster. *Raw power is tyranny.*

To be the "head" of the home is not a relationship of *superiority*. It is actually using your position to love, build, and nurture a relationship of deep sacrifice with your wife. Husbands are to demonstrate their headship by sacrificing themselves for the wife.

With that in mind, notice our text does not say "Husbands rule over your wives, command them, demonstrate your authority over them and command them around." It says, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her". Give your self up for your wife. So now we have to ask ourselves the question. What is agape love?

What Love is Not

First let us look at what it is not. Agape love is not mere **emotion**. Love, as God defines it, is not primarily an emotion. The world says, "when the feeling stops, the love is over." Love is not a tingly sensation. Love is not sentimentalism. Love has nothing to do with how you feel. God so loved the world that he gave His only Son. He didn't look at the world and say, "I just can't resist them; I've got to get them in heaven. They're terrific." There wasn't one thing in us that was deserving. We were enemies; we hated God; we were sinful and vile, but God loved us anyway. And He loved us so much, he gave Himself.

Agape love is not mere **appreciation**. It is not just saying nice words to someone. Proverbs 27:6 — “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” Love is more than empty words. Love is action. Love is an act of your will that chooses the best for the other person. We can say all kinds of nice things to a person and it not help them. Sometimes love is saying very hard words to a person.

Agape love is not **admiration**. It is not simply liking or being fond of someone. Agape love goes far beyond admiration. It sacrifices for those that are not admirable.

Love: a Reflection of God

We read in our Bible that “God is love.” Jesus is the exact imprint of God’s love. By looking at the cross we can say that agape love is a voluntary abandonment of self-preservation for the good of another. Husbands, use your position of authority to sacrifice your life for your wife.

Agape love is a **God-centered** love. Understand the Bible makes a shocking statement like: “God is agape”. 1 John 4:16 — “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

You cannot truly love your wife as you ought without being born again. This kind of selfless love is impossible simply through the human nature. You must have the divine nature dwelling in you. God must dwell in you. It is a God-centered love. Agape love is a voluntary act of the will. “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...” (**John 3:16**).

I’ve heard men say about their wife—“I just don’t love her any more”. Well, then choose to love her. You’ve stopped abandoning yourself for the good of your wife. Start anew right now.

The Greatest Demonstration of Love

The demonstration of a husband’s love ought to mirror Christ’s act of sacrifice on the cross for His Bride. Over and over in the New Testament, the apostolic demonstration of love is the cross.

1 John 3:16 — “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” This is how we come to understand the love of God—look at the gruesome picture of Calvary. Look at the Son of God writhing there in unimaginable pain. The One who knew no sin, the Lamb who is worthy of all glory, writhing in pain. Men, demonstrate that to your wife.

But you say, “She doesn’t deserve my love. You have no idea how she’s been toward me. Remember that Christ’s love was given to people who had not merited it, who did not deserve it, who did nothing to earn it, in whom there was nothing that compelled Him to love them.

Romans 5:8 — “but God shows [demonstrates] his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Christ gave own spotless life for the most

unworthy and rotten people. This is LOVE. The word Paul uses is agape. Christ died for those who spit upon Him, who ridiculed Him, and who hated Him.

How Do We Practice Biblical Headship?

Ephesians 5:25 says, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”. You say great. This is an impossible command. This is like telling me to jump over the moon. How can I love like Christ?

This command cannot be obeyed by the husband without the supernatural power of God’s grace. The husband has an absolute necessity of God’s grace. He must be born again to fulfill this command. The way to change your marriage is not by changing your wife. It is by changing yourself. God must change you. You must be a born again man. Without grace, you cannot have the marriage God would have for you. Without the God who is love dwelling in you, you cannot truly love anyone.

Understand the love you are called to takes supernatural grace. God does not call us to love our wives when they treat us well. That’s not Christlike love. **The person we are called to love is the one nailing us to the cross!** “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (**Ephesians 5:25**).

You must know how to **practice** biblical love. We see this in Corinthians 13. A sure sign that you are not practicing biblical love in your marriage is that there are walls of bitterness there.

Husband, does your wife listen to you? If the answer is no, then you are probably not demonstrating love to her in a way she understands. There may be walls of bitterness in your marriage that need to be torn down.

Listen to how Paul describes the importance of love: “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” In Paul’s day, in the worship of Cybele and Dionysus, two pagan false gods, there was speaking in ecstatic languages accompanied by “clanging cymbals, smashing gongs, and blaring trumpets”¹ What Paul seems to be saying is, no matter how eloquent you are, if you do not have love in your life and your walk with Christ, you are no different than pagans.

The 16 Attributes of Agape Love

Paul gives sixteen biblical attributes of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–8a — *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”*

Love is... When we talk about what love is, we could actually change the word love to Christ because Christ is love, and God is love. Christ is patient and kind. Christ does not envy or boast. Christ is not arrogant or rude, etc. Christ NEVER fails!

¹ William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 131.

I want to be like Christ, and if we are saved, the Father will conform us to His glorious image (Rom. 8:28-30).

1 – Love is Patient

Love is patient. “Love is patient” (vs. 1). The KJV says, “Charity suffereth long” (verse 4). Long suffering is the ability to control anger or frustration. The word translated patient here is *makrothumia*. It means “long-tempered” and is the exact opposite of our expression “short-fused.” Patience is how love *reacts* in order to bring peace and the love of Christ to a negative situation. Husbands, when you don’t get what you want, how do you react? A lack of patience will turn your home into a war zone. Patience waits and never gives in to sinful anger. Patience waits for a godly outcome.

Understand that patience is not just “white-knuckling” your emotions in order to hold back the rage or storm that really wants to come out. No, patience is joyfully submitting to Christ for the good of another person. Jesus submitted to death on a cross, so we are to joyfully submit to Christ knowing the outcome will be good.

The opposite of patience is a short fuse. Often when we are hurting in a marriage we want to say something hurtful back.

You must choose to be patient. You must choose to put aside feelings of anger and bitterness and pride. If you do not have patient love, you will over react and you will act foolish and angry. You will regret it.

Choose to patiently put aside sinful anger. Choose to patiently deal with the problem. Sinful anger never makes the situation better. It creates new wrongs and new hurts and new problems. Love suffers long with those feelings of anger without acting on them.

Proverbs 14:29, “He that is slow to wrath [anger] is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit [quick-tempered] exalts folly.”

Consider our Lord as an example of perfect patience. While the Lord Jesus Christ was hanging on the cross, after He had endured all that He had endured, He said this about His killers: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34a). Christ could have cursed his killers on the cross, but instead he blessed them when they hurt Him. He asked His Father not to hold this against them.

2 – Love is Kind & Giving

Love is kind (verse 4). The word kind is translated from a Greek word (*chresteuomai*) that means to be **useful** or profitable, to furnish what is needed. To be kind is to make life easier for the other person and to serve them from your heart. It is the same word that Jesus uses when he says, “My yoke is EASY [same greek word for kind] and my burden is light.” Kindness, like Jesus, gets into the harness of life’s problems with the other person and does all they can to lift those burdens. That’s kindness.

This kind of love looks for ways to make life easier for another by giving...

- a helping hand (around the house, with the children, with dinner, etc.)
- a kind note or call
- a word of encouragement and compassion for difficult circumstances
- a significant amount of time and attention
- gentleness of speech

Kindness is love in action. The opposite of kindness is harshness and a suspicious spirit. Kindness on the other hand introduces positives into all situations. Kindness is “the sympathetic kindness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain”.² Kindness thinks far more of others than of self. Kindness can be broken down into four categories: gentleness, helpfulness, willingness, and initiative.

Gentleness. Kindness leads you to be very sensitive about being unnecessarily harsh. You are sensitive, tender. Even if you say hard things you are careful to bend over backwards to make your words as easy as possible to hear.

Helpfulness. Kindness means you are always looking around to meet the needs of the moment. You come into a dirty, disorganized house, and instead of yelling about how it ought to be, you say nothing and simply start doing the dishes, helping with the laundry, pick up a screaming child, using your words of love to calm the situation. *Kindness means you put your needs on hold to meet the needs of others.*

Willingness. Kindness inspires you to be agreeable. Instead of being obstinate, stubborn, always right and self-righteous, you want to cooperate. You are totally pliable and flexible and willing to help. A kind husband ends a thousand potential arguments by his willingness to listen and not demand his way.

Initiative. Kindness thinks ahead and takes the first step. Kind love is always thinking of others. A kind husband will not have to be coerced off the couch to help set the table. No the kind husband thinks ahead and is already setting the table and filling the glasses before being asked. A kind husband helps put the house back in order after company. A kind husband will help get the children ready for church or ready for bed without the wife having to ask. A kind husband will take the initiative!

3 – Love is Not Selfish

Love does not envy (verse 4). Envy is pure selfishness. James 3 says if you have selfishness in your life, it will produce “disorder and every vile practice.”

It means you wish the good things happening to another were happening to you. It means you think you are better than your wife. The Bible forbids any Christian for having this attitude, especially husbands toward their wives. Paul says in Philippians 2:3 — “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

To love means you won’t be grieved at any blessings of another person, their wealth, gifts, qualities or status. Love means you want the very best for your wife. You do everything you can to help her succeed.

² Ibid., 256.

Are you selfish and envious in your marriage, men? Do you put your desires and interests above your spouses? Love puts selfishness to death. Love wants the other person to succeed. Husbands, love your wife. Do not envy the fact that she does not have life as hard as you. The truth is she may have it much harder. And even if she doesn't, you should not be upset. That's envy. That's not love.

A Warning

Remember selfishness is a behavior that comes out of the old Adamic, sinful selfish nature. It could come out of you or me today at any time if we are slack and careless in our walk with God. In order to be giving and not filled with selfish envy, I want to encourage you to get alone with God in the Word and prayer. There is no brother or sister here today that cannot be selfless like Christ if he or she will surrender fully to Him each moment of each day. There is NEVER a time when I am free from the temptation to be selfish. I need to walk with Jesus closely so that his patience, kindness, and selfless attitude will shine through me.

Application

The opposite of envy is selflessness. It means you will sacrifice so that your wife can succeed. She wants to succeed in little things. It may mean you start putting the children to bed so she can get to bed before 3am! It may mean that you come home from work earlier to help her prepare for a big day of company.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I want my wife to succeed in the home?
- Do I want her to feel loved by me?
- Does my wife see me as looking out for myself first?

Instead of being envious and selfish, write your wife a love note telling her you were thinking about her. For those who are unmarried, choose someone from the congregation that you want to encourage. Instead of thinking they have it easier than you, find something they might be struggling with, and encourage them with a note.

4 – Love Does Not Boast

“I’ve got it all figured out.” Love never says that. Love does not brag or boast. The idea is literally to “parade oneself”. Have you ever been in a difficult discussion with your spouse, and when you were in a corner, you began to paint yourself as the most spiritual person on the planet? You say things like: “I would never do that!” That is not love. That is selfishness.

To boast means to be “rash in bragging about one’s own excellences or endowments” (Barnes). This attitude of vaunting comes from the attitude of *superiority* over others; It is usually combined with a feeling of contempt or disregard for your wife.

When we are offended we act as if we have never done the same thing. How should we respond when we are offended? To love by closing your mouth and being

very careful what you say. Say with David, “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3).

Listen to the words of Paul in **Ephesians 4:29–32** — “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Let me paraphrase it for you: **Ephesians 4:31** “Let all manner of bitterness, and rage, and grudges, and raising of your voice, and misrepresentation, be taken off of you and thrown in a garbage heap, with all thoughts of evil towards others”. Sanitize your self from these six evils. These are the filthy rags of the old man. Put them off, and throw them far, far away from you in the garbage heap.

Stop boasting and having a superior attitude against your spouse and be tender and forgiving “even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.”

5 – Love is Humble

Love is **not “arrogant”** or literally “puffed up” or arrogant (**verse 5**). True love means you have a very low view of yourself. To love means not to overvalue yourself by concentrating on your achievements, your respect and position, your abilities and gifts. You realize everything you have is a gift from God. “To whom much is given much will be required”. To love means you do not compare yourself with others to try and show yourself to be better than they are.

It is easy to fill our heads with knowledge and our hearts remain cold and arrogant. God will destroy your home if you are that way. You can have all the knowledge of Scripture, but so does the devil. It is not knowledge that pleases God, but knowledge applied through love. It is knowing Christ and becoming conformed to His selfless death on the cross for undeserving people.

6 – Love is Not Rude

Love is not **rude (verse 5)**. Rudeness is characterized by irritability. It’s when you are under pressure and you turn sour. Some people seem to have the motto, “Never pass up an opportunity to get upset with your spouse”. To be irritable means to “be near the point of a knife”. Are you the kind of a person that is always feeling poked by a situation. Rude people are those who are always locked and loaded and ready to overreact.

Rudeness really is the way a person acts when they have no care for the person around them. Love is careful to act appropriately. Under pressure, love acts appropriately. Love does not turn sour.

Rudeness is like a destructive storm waiting to happen. It tramples over people and has no care what destruction it leaves in its path.

When tough circumstances come, often we want to take out our tiredness on other people. We may be hurting inside, and we want to release on others. We need to take it to the prayer closet. When war is raging in your heart, confine the storm to yourself, and do not act rudely to others, especially your wife.

7 – Love is the First to Give In

Love does not seek its own way (1 Corinthians 13:5). The husband who is concerned with getting all he can from his wife is not loving. If you are concerned with only what you can GET from your wife, you are sowing the seeds of destruction for your marriage.

Living with a Monster

When I was first married, I thought I was quite far along in my Christian walk. At that time I had been a Christian then for eight years. I had read through the Bible quite aggressively, and I sincerely wanted to please the Lord. Then something truly awful happened. I realized I was living with a monster. And the monster was me! I had no idea how very selfish I could be when I didn't get my way.

I found out that when I really wanted my way, I could give my dear wife 100 reasons from the Bible why I was right. I would "prosecute" my case, seeking my own way, and I almost never lost. I thought I was leading my wife and being the head of my home, but I was really doing damage to my wife. I found soon enough that I wasn't comfortable just talking about the Bible with her. I didn't have the spiritual connection I had with her before we were married. After about ten years of marriage, while I was reading my Bible one day, the light came on. The Scripture was opened to James chapter 3:13-18. This is what I read:

"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

Doing the Devil's Work

Immediately I realized that James was talking about two very different ways of living. There was the life of humble wisdom in contrast to the life of "disorder and every vile practice." I was pretty sure which one I fit into. What also struck me were the roots of such behavior: bitterness and selfishness. In all of my discussions with my wife, I felt like I was right, and to top it off I was using the Bible. Many times I would be bitter that my wife just didn't see things the same way I did. I used to think the problem was her. It wasn't her at all. It was me. What really brought me to a deep conviction of my own sin was the declaration from James that using the Bible in a

selfish, unloving, and at times bitter way was “earthly, unspiritual, and demonic”. Wow. I was doing the devil’s work.

The Roots of Demonic Wisdom

Satan masquerades as an angel of light. His greatest tool to keep us from true holiness and humility is to use the truths of the Bible, but to apply them in a selfish way. The roots of the tree of demonic wisdom are selfishness and bitterness. To make things clearer, one way selfishness is manifested is through a sour, pouty attitude. This pouty attitude is focused on “me” and “my hurt”. It also turns very bitter and is manifested by a mean spirit. James says this attitude is earthly (self-centered), unspiritual (grieves the Holy Spirit), and demonic (3:15). Instead of seeking my own way, I need to surrender to God – even if I’m right in the middle of an argument.

Surrendering to God

How does one surrender to God? It is simple. I change my goal from pleasing self to pleasing God. In surrendering to God, my goal now is to grow and change into the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-30). Remember Jesus prayed, “Not my will but thine be done” (Luke 22:42). God says there is actually a war that is going on inside each of us for control. It is a war between the flesh (my selfishness) and the Holy Spirit. “For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Galatians 5:17). I have to put to death my selfish ambition and put my hands up in surrender to God by serving my wife in tenderness, kindness, and forgiveness (Eph. 4:32).

Building My Roots in Christ

Each time that I surrender to God I am building a strong root system in my life that is going to produce a godly and humble way of living as James says. Surrender (choosing to please God instead of self) produces a selfless attitude focused on God that is pure, peaceable, reasonable, sincere, impartial and righteous (James 3:13-18). I don’t have to shout or pout or fuss or slam doors or make selfish declarations. I can surrender and trust God with a pure and sincere desire to please God. I can speak with a tone of peace and impartiality. Ephesians 4 describes specific actions of surrender and selflessness. We can glorify God by doing three things when we feel insulted, neglected, or disrespected. We can choose to:

1. feel the pain of the other person (tenderness),
2. make life easier for the other person (kindness), and
3. take responsibility for my wrongs while forgiving the other person (forgiveness).

Remember Christ loves you, not because of anything you can give to Him, but because of what He can give to you. You cannot help Christ in any way. He loves to bestow favor on you that you do not deserve. He got nothing out of it but helping you. That’s love.

8 – Love is Not Touchy

Love is not easily offended “is not irritable” (verse 5). The idea here is that love is not easily injured or offended. Psalm 119:165 —“Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.” Lit, “In nothing they will be offended”.

There is a difference between sensitivity and touchiness. It’s important to be sensitive to the needs of others, but touchiness is self-centered and from the pit. This irritability can come across in having a pity party for yourself, or just being irritated with the other person.

Most marriages are in turmoil not because of BIG things, but because of little tiny things that drive us crazy. Those little things that offend us are a sign that we are very self centered. Love is not this way. Love is selfless.

Are you easily offended? Do you go off at little things? Jesus endured a cross because he loved the church. He endured the mocking, the crown of thorns. Do you love your wife. Come what may, when you love like God loves you will not be so easily offended.

9 – Love Keeps No Record of Wrongs

Love is not resentful. It keeps no record of wrongs suffered (1 Corinthians 13:5). 1 Peter 4:8 — “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.” If you have kept a record of wrongs, it means that you are not loving. To forgive means never to bring it up again. It is a true sign of love to forgive as Jesus told us to – seventy times seven!

Sometimes it is hard to forgive, but you know you have forgiven if you are willing not to bring the wrong up again. It may take time to build trust. Sometimes it takes a wife longer to “get over” something than her husband. That’s ok. The husband or wife needs to give the other spouse the needed time in order to truly stop bringing it up and once and for all tear up the record of wrong.

10 – Love Doesn’t Hold Grudges or Clam Up

Love does not rejoice in or bring up former wrongdoing. Love takes no pleasure in iniquity. We ought not use our spouse’s failing to our own advantage. It is easy to hold a grudge or manipulate to get our way. This is what it means to “rejoice in iniquity.” When we love someone we cannot rejoice at their sins or the consequences of sin, but we are compassionate toward our spouse’s failings. We want to help them and restore them.

Husbands and wives, consider Galatians 6:1-3—concerning your wife, “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” Restore your spouse quickly, but be sure you truly are restoring them. Don’t just give empty words. It may take

some time with God before you can truly forgive. If you don't deal with it, you'll keep bringing it up.

What we are tempted to do with faults is to store them up and use them in a time of war. Instead of rejoicing in iniquity, seek to help your spouse reconcile. If she asks for forgiveness, forgive her immediately.

What is forgiveness? Forgiveness is not so much about forgetting. We hear the phrase "forgive and forget". Well, there are some things we have a hard time forgetting. And even though God forgives us, he chooses to put those sins in the sea of His forgetfulness. In other words, to forgive is to *choose never to bring up the offence ever again*.

This does not mean that we ignore sin. If your wife sins against you, you should deal with the problem. Go after the problem, not the person. Love your wife, and deal with the sin. Consider Matthew 18:15 — "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone". Then when forgiveness is granted, you never have the right to bring up the offense ever again.

11 – Love Rejoices in Spiritual Victories

Love rejoices with the truth. The idea is rejoicing in spiritual victories when one is walking in the truth (Gill).

There ought to be a climate of spiritual victory in the home. Yes we are going to fail, sometimes daily. But we ought to be loving, forgiving, and reinforcing the positive things each other is doing in their walk with God.

It is vital that husbands establish the fertile ground of the truth by encouraging Bible reading and prayer. There ought to be a time of sincere family devotions in the home where each parent and child (if they are school age) can share what they are learning, confessing sins, humbly thanking God for victories, and encouraging the whole family to humbly walk with God.

12 – Love Covers and Protects

Love bears with, or "covers" all things. The idea is that love protects. Paul uses the word "cherish" for this idea in Ephesians 5:28–29 — "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church". Husbands are to cherish their wives.

When you hit your thumb with a hammer, you feel the pain, and you do all you can to relieve it. Do you do that for your wife? Do you know when she is hurting? Do you protect her?

¹ Peter 3:7 has this idea of protection, "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." Three ways to protect your wife are listed in this verse.

Concern. You are to learn about your wife. Find out what hurts her and protect her from it. Have lots of conversations with her. Get to know her. You are the initiator.

Courtesy. You are to treat your wife as a weaker vessel or a “fragile vase”. This means you show honor. She is a precious treasure.

Care. She is a fragile vase. She is emotionally more sensitive than you for the most part. Protect her! Do not tear her down. *You can win the argument and destroy your wife! Don't do it.*

13 – Love Assumes & Thinks the Best

Love believes all things. Love believes the best of people. Remember when you were first courting your wife? You thought she could do no wrong. She had deficiencies then, but back then you thought they were “cute”. You loved her. You thought the best of her.

When things are going great in marriage all the deficiencies of your wife are forgotten, they are covered, but when things are hard, you fill in any blank spaces with further negatives. Focus on the positives of your wife. Give her the benefit of the doubt. Fill in the unknowns with positives.

Never, never, never speak ill of your wife in front of others. Speak about her as if she were there. Constantly rehearse in your mind the things that you are thankful about for her.

14 – Love Hopes for the Best

Love hopes all things. Love hopes for the best. Love fills in the blanks of life with good. It never thinks the worst, but always hopes and expects the best about a person when there is any question.

This could be translated as follows: “Love is always hopeful” or “Love hopes under all circumstances”. Love doesn't write “hopeless” over anyone or any circumstances.

This biblical optimism grows out of faith in God, not men. Hope is the joyous anticipation of good to come. This hope in God must be woven into the practical fabric of our lives.

Hope is not anchored in having things your way, thinking you can bargain with or manipulate God to act on what you think is in your best interest.

Hope is attached to God Himself to do what is right, good and best for all and knowing that He will give sufficient grace to handle any situation that His plan has for you. It is hope in Him that He will bring about what is good, right, fair, etc. in every one and all situations.

15 – Love Sticks with Imperfect People

Love “endures all things” (verse 7). Consider the definition of the Greek word (hupomeno 5278) translated **endure** is a military term used of an army holding a vital position at all costs. This could be translated as follows:

- “Love is ever patient”
- “Love endures without limit”
- “Love gives us power to endure everything”

Battles have been won because a small pocket of men refused to quit and run. It means to remain under – that is to endure or sustain a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions or provocations in faith and patience.

“All things” – every sort of offense, pressure, affliction, difficulty, victory, defeat etc. Love endures! It eliminates attitudes such as:

- I can’t take it anymore.
- Things have got to ease up.
- If things don’t change, I’ll crack.

Your love for God and others, energized by God within you (Phil. 2:13), is the source and strength for endurance. Only theology can change this. Knowing God and His love and care for you. How is your endurance seen in your home? at work? Etc.

Consider some biblical examples of endurance.

Job endured. Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

Paul endured. 2 Tim. 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Jesus Christ endured. Heb. 12:2,3 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

16 – Love Bears Eternal Fruit

Love never ends or fails (verse 8). Love bears eternal fruit and brings eternal rewards. Love always prospers! May God use this simple study to change your life as you raise your commitment to love God and your wife biblically.

CONCLUSION

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church! 1 John 3:16, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” The one closest to us is the one we should lay our life down for.

Marriage is a temporary institution. There is no marriage in heaven. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. Determine to demonstrate Christ’s love for the church to your wife.