



COLOSSIANS STUDY GUIDE
WEEK #8

WEEK 8
HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES
COLOSSIANS 3:19

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

[Colossians 3:19, ESV]

INTRODUCTION

While some people want to argue with the previous command for wives to submit to their husbands, few people will argue with the importance of husbands loving their wives. After all, our world is devastated by the failure of men to live out this command. More and more men are abandoning their God-given responsibilities in the home, and most people know firsthand the damage that happens as a result.

The call for men to love their wives and lead their homes is a call to responsibility. Those who minimize the differences in role between men and women often make it an issue of who has the power or authority. But the real issue is, who has the responsibility? Who will God hold accountable for the direction of the family? Who carries the primary weight of the spiritual flourishing of the family? God's answer: men.

Women should be relieved to know that God's call for male leadership in the home is a call for the man to love his wife and serve her as Jesus did the church. When men embrace their role and obey God's word by lovingly serving their wives it is a tremendous blessing for their families.

Men should remember that their wives are craving this kind of Christ-like leadership. Wives desperately want their husbands to put the kind of energy, thought, care, and attention into their marriages as they do into their sports, hobbies, cars, and jobs. Godly women are eager to follow selfless men.

The power to fulfill God's commands for husbands only comes from living a Christ-Centered life that remembers how Jesus has selflessly loved and served us, and begins to live with his power to imitate his leadership.

INVESTIGATION

Read Colossians 3:19.

1. What two commands are given in this verse?

2. What does it mean for a husband to love his wife? What do you think Paul had in mind?

3. Read Ephesians 5:25, the parallel passage to Colossians 3:19. What additional insight does this parallel passage provide?

4. The word translated “do not be harsh” is a word that means “to cause bitter feelings, embitter, make bitter”¹
Why is this an appropriate warning for husbands?

IMPLICATION

1. The Greek word translated love (agapao) means “to have a warm regard for and interest in another, cherish, have affection for, love.”² It would seem obvious that husbands should love their wives, but Paul still commands it. In what ways do husbands have a difficult time loving their wives?

2. What are some practical examples of what it means for husbands to love their wives and not embitter them?

3. Men are notorious for being romantic and cultivating love to win a woman and then neglecting to cherish her once married. Why do you think this is?

¹ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 812.

² Ibid. 5.

4. Life-stage application question:

- a. Married Men – What is one specific way that you can better love and not embitter your wife?
- b. Married Women – What is one specific way you that you can encourage your husband to cultivate romance and love?
- c. Single Men – How can you prepare yourself now to be a Colossians 3:19 man if you are married at some point in the future?
- d. Single Women – What does this teach you about the kind of man you should be willing to marry? What specific things will you look for to see whether a potential spouse is a Colossians 3:19 man?

OTHER ISSUES:

What are ways that men tend to sin against their wives and use their authority in sinful ways?

Like Adam, the sins of men fall into two general categories: **sins of commission** (doing what you're not supposed to do) and **sins of omission** (not doing what you're supposed to do). This leads chauvinistic or cowardly tendencies:

Chauvinism

1. **No Sissy Stuff Sam:** whatever women do, do the opposite
2. **Success and Status Stewart:** masculinity = material success
3. **Give'em Heck Hank:** angry and abusive
4. **I'm the Boss Bob:** domineering and controlling; in authority, not under authority

Cowardice

1. **Little Boy Larry:** never grew up, disorganized, lives with his mother, etc.
2. **Sturdy Oak Owen:** absolutely dependable but emotionally absent
3. **Hyper-Spiritual Henry:** Hides behind religious behavior and "God talk." Talks at you but not to you.
4. **Good Time Gary:** irresponsible life of the party

Ephesians 5:25 calls men to love their wives as Christ loves the Church. Men are not ready to be good husbands until they are a part of the Church and understand how Christ loves the Church by taking responsibility for her and sacrificing himself for her.

The essence of true masculinity is taking responsibility.³

How does a husband cultivate love for his wife even if he finds her unlovely?

This is why Ephesians 5:25 calls husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Though the church was rebellious, dishonorable, and stained by sin, Jesus still laid his life down for her. As a husband considers the unmerited grace he's received from Jesus, his heart will change. Regardless of his feelings, a husband is called to honor his wife. Here are 8 ways husbands can honor their wives:

³ Mark Driscoll, "Marriage and Men" (Sermon given 3/22/09 at Mars Hill Church). Notes available online at <http://blog.marshillchurch.org/2009/03/24/notes-marriage-and-men/>

1. **Honor her maritally.** Take a wife honorably. Establish right priorities, and be a one woman man—absolutely faithful to your wife.
2. **Honor her physically.** Be strong for your wife, not against her. Be protective of her and present with her.
3. **Honor her emotionally.** Be emotionally present and intimate. Take her on dates.
4. **Honor her verbally.** Speak honorably to her. Speak honorably of her, when she is present and absent.
5. **Honor her financially.** Provide for the financial needs of your family, organize your budget, and be generous towards your wife.
6. **Honor her practically.** Consider her needs and how you can serve her.
7. **Honor her parentally.** Be “Pastor Dad” by shepherding your children (praying with them, teaching them about Jesus, reading the Bible with them, etc.).
8. **Honor her spiritually.** You initiate and lead prayer, Bible, chats, church attendance, etc. Take responsibility for your church.

What happens when you fail to honor your wife? God ignores you (1 Pet. 3:7). Repent.⁴

⁴ Ibid.