

THE DUTIES OF
HUSBANDS & WIVES



RICHARD STEELE (1629-1692)

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The Duties of Husbands and Wives is a modern abridgment and paraphrase of Richard Steele's material by D. Scott Meadows.

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THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES

*“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself;
and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”*

—Ephesians 5:33

I. Introduction

Marriage is the foundation of all society, and so this topic is very important. Explaining marital duties to you is much easier than persuading you to do them. Conform your will to Scripture, not vice versa. Take Ephesians 5:33 to heart.

1. The Connection

“Nevertheless” is a transition from the spiritual reality of Christ’s relationship to the church. It either means that in spite of the unattainable ideal, strive to attain it, or because of the noble example, imitate it, in your relationship with your spouse.

2. The Direction

A. The universal obligation of it

“Let every one of you,” no matter how good you are or how bad your spouse. All husbands are entitled to their wives’ respect, whether they are wise or foolish, intelligent or slow, skillful or clumsy. All wives are entitled to their husbands’ love, whether beautiful or ugly, rich or poor, submissive or rebellious.

B. The particular application of it

“In particular,” each and every husband and wife should apply this to their own particular case.

3. Summary of Duties

A. Every husband’s duty to love his wife.

This is not the only duty but it includes all others. He should love her as himself. This is both how (the Golden Rule) and why he is to love her (because they are both really one, loving her will result in blessings to him).

B. Every wife's duty

To fear (Greek) or reverence (KJV) or respect (NKJV) her husband, both for his person and his position. This necessarily includes love, because if she loves him, she will try to please him, and avoid offending him.

II. Doctrine for Every Husband and Wife

Remember this is your Creator's counsel, clearly articulated in both the Old and New Testaments, and by both Paul the apostle to Gentiles (Eph 5:23 ff.; Col 3:18 ff.) and Peter the apostle to Jews (1Pe 3:1 ff.). These two duties (husband-love, wife-respect) are not exhaustive, but are mentioned particularly either because they are the most common failures of each or because they include all other duties. Another explanation is that respect is what husbands need most, and love, what wives need most, from their spouses (Doug Wilson). God counsels not only that we may have eternal life, but comfort here and now. A godly marriage is a bit of heaven on earth. Reviewing these duties should humble us for our past failures, and challenge us to future improvement.

III. The Duties Belonging to Both Alike

1. Living with Each Other

He must "leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife" (Gen 2:24), and she must "forget also thine own people, and thy father's house" (Psa 45:10). He must "dwell with them" (1Pe 3:7), and she must not "depart from her husband," even if he is an unbeliever (1Co 7:10). The other duties of marriage require living together, as regular sexual relations, which they both owe each other (1Co 7:3-5). The OT prohibits husbands from going to war during their first year of marriage (Deu 24:5). This shows the importance of living together.

2. Loving Each Other

This is both the husband's (Col 3:19) and the wife's duty (Tit 2:4). Love is the great reason and comfort of marriage. This love is not merely romance, but genuine and constant affection and care for each other "with a pure heart fervently" (1Pe 1:22). Marital love cannot be based on beauty or wealth, for these are passing, and not even on piety, for that may decay. It must be based upon God's command which never changes. The marriage vow obliges "for better or for worse," and married persons ought to consider their own spouses the best in the world for them. Marital love must be durable, lasting even after death has severed the bond (Pro 31:12). This true-hearted love brings true content and comfort in its train. It guards against

adultery and jealousy. It prevents or lessens family trouble. Without it, the marriage is like a bone out of joint. There is pain until it is restored.

3. Staying Faithful to Each Other

Every man should have (sexually) his own wife, and every wife her own husband (1Co 7:2), and only their own. Imitate the first Adam who had but one wife and the second Adam who has but one church. The marriage covenant binds you to your own spouse as the dearest, sweetest, and best in the world. The slightest infidelity, even in the heart, may lead to full-blown adultery. Without repentance, adultery destroys both earthly happiness and reasonable expectation of heaven. It almost dissolves marriage, and in the OT was a capital crime (Deu 22:22). Be careful to avoid temptations to this sin. The man who is not satisfied with one woman will never be satisfied with many, because this sin has no boundaries. Faithfulness also involves keeping each other's secrets. These must not be disclosed unless there is a greater obligation. Telling your spouse's secrets is bad when accidental, worse when the result of temper, and the worst when it is motivated by hate.

4. Helping Each Other

The wife should be a "help meet for him" (Gen 2:18), implying they should both help each other. They should carry these things together:

A. Their work

If she works at home and he works outside, both their work shall be easier. For motivation, let him give attention to all of Proverbs, and her to the last chapter especially.

B. Their crosses

Though newlyweds expect only pleasure in marriage, trouble is bound to come (1Co 7:28). You may face loss of worldly goods, harm to your children, afflictions from both friends and enemies. Spouses must be friends to each other through thick and thin.

C. Their commitment to Christ

Live "*as being heirs together of the grace of life*" (1Pe 3:7). The highest end of marriage is to promote each other's eternal happiness. Cooperation here is very important. His knowledge must aid her ignorance and her zeal his discouragement. When the husband is home, he must instruct and pray with his family and sanctify the Sabbath, but in his absence, she must look to these things.

5. Being Patient with Each Other

This duty we owe to all, but especially to our spouse (Eph 4:31-32). There are many temptations in marriage to become impatient! Hot tempers ignite civil wars indoors, and no good ever comes of them. Both need a meek and quiet spirit. Learn to hold your peace to keep the peace. Withdraw until the storm is over. You are not

two angels married, but two sinful children of Adam. Wink at lesser faults, and be careful in confronting greater ones. Acknowledge your faults to one another and confess them all to God. Yield to one another rather than to the devil (Eph 4:27).

6. Saving Each Other

1 Corinthians 7:16 insinuates that our great duty is to promote the salvation of our spouse. What good is it to enjoy marriage now and then go to hell together? If you let your spouse be damned, where is your love? Both should inquire into each other's spiritual state, and use the means appointed to improve it. Chrysostom said, "Let them both go to church and then discuss the sermon together." If both are Christians already, then they should do what they can to help each other to become thorough saints. Speak often of God and spiritual things. Be fellow-pilgrims to the Celestial City.

7. Maintaining Regular but Moderate Marital Sex

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb 13:4). Marital sex is designed to remedy impure affections, not excite them. You cannot follow every sexual folly you can imagine with your spouse, just because you are married. Owning wine gives you no permission to get drunk. Be moderate and sensible. For example, you might abstain for a time to give yourselves to prayer (1Co 7:5). Even in marital relations we must show reverence to God and respect for each other. True love does not behave rudely.

8. Looking Out for Each Other's Interests in All Things

Help each other's health, and be sick together, at least in spirit. One should not be rich while the other suffers want. Advance each other's good reputation. A husband naturally and rightly cares for things that are of the world, how he may please his wife, and the wife does the same (1Co 7:33-34). This brings honor to their faith, comfort to their lives, and a blessing on all they have. They should be bosom friends, laughing and weeping together, with nothing but death separating their interests.

9. Praying for Each Other

Peter warns "that your prayers be not hindered" (1Pe 3:7), which suggests they should pray for and with each other. "Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren" (Gen 25:21). We should pray for everyone, but especially our spouse. The purest love is expressed by earnest prayer, and prayer will preserve love. Seek times for prayer together. Mr. Bolton prayed twice privately, twice with his wife, and twice with his family, each day. Prayer elevates Christian marriage above heathen marriages and the cohabitation of animals.

IV. The Special Duty of a Husband: Love

Love is the foundation of all other duties toward her. Everything flows from this. Without love, every performance of duty toward her seems hard. Tenderness, honor, care, and kindness are merely the beams from the sun of love.

1. The Dimensions of a Godly Husband's Love

The love of a husband to his wife is peculiar to this relation. It is distinct from parental love and from animal lust.

A. The ground of it

You are married to her and God commands husbands to love their wives. This alone will last forever, since she may become less attractive in many ways.

B. The extent of it

You must love both her body and soul. Therefore you should choose a wife that is attractive to you physically, in personality, and spiritually, or you do her disservice.

C. The degree of it

Above your love for all others, including your parents and children, and certainly above any person outside the family. "Be thou ravished always with her love" (Pro 5:19).

D. The duration of it

"Always" (Pro 5:19 quoted above), not only in public but in private, not for a week or month or year, but until death. Your love should daily increase through old age. You had her beauty and strength, so why not her wrinkles and illnesses? Inner loveliness usually increases as outer loveliness decreases. There are many biblical reasons for a husband's perpetual love.

2. The Pattern of a Godly Husband's Love

A. Jesus Christ's love for His church

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church" (Eph 5:25). "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (5:29). While we cannot attain equality with Christ, yet the quality of our love should be the same as His. How, then, does Jesus Christ love His church?

1) Genuine, without hypocrisy

His love was so real and intense that He died for the church.

2) Free, without conditions before or expectations after

He gave Himself to cleanse His church, implying she was no beauty beforehand. The husband must draw love from her by his own love. True love is more about bettering the object loved than enriching the subject.

3) Holy, without impurity

Christ loved the church “that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (5:26). This teaches the husband to labor diligently to further the sanctification of his wife.

4) Great, without comparison

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Joh 15:13). This is what Christ did for His church (5:25).

5) Constant, without change

Even until He presents her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle (Eph 5:27). Many times has Christ been put off by them, and yet He continues to love them. Husbands should copy His example. No bad behavior on her part is grounds to stop loving her.

6) Active, without neglect

He “nourisheth and cherisheth” her (5:29). He must do his utmost to supply all her needs, whether for support, or constant friendship, or a nurse for her illness.

B. The husband’s love for himself

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies” (5:28). “Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself” (5:33). Now although this pattern is less than Christ’s love for His church, yet it is easier to comprehend.

1) Tender

We handle our own sores and griefs more tenderly than anyone else. “No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it” (5:29). Wives are like crystal glasses, easily broken if not tenderly handled. Women are more liable to fears and passions and griefs.

2) Cheerful

No man is so ready to help a man as himself. Best friends sometimes fail you but you help yourself. So be ready to help your wife. If a cloud arises between you, dissipate it by your love. You will not stay angry with yourself very long. No mediator should be needed.

3. The Demonstration of a Godly Husband’s Love

A. In word

1) He teaches her.

Dwell with her with understanding (1Pe 3:7). She should ask her own husband at home if she wants to learn something, and not speak in the church (1Co 14:35). Woe to the husband that lacks either the will or the skill to teach his wife! He ought to acquire it in either case. Otherwise she will probably curse him forever in hell!

2) He reproves her.

“Charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1Pe 4:8), so he should overlook many faults. Just as a sword dulls with constant use, so does reproof. Yet true love

sometimes requires rebuke, but it must be given with the greatest wisdom and tenderness imaginable, not before strangers, rarely before the family, mainly for sins, seldom for anything else. Give commendation first, and explanation afterward. Reproof should be short, like a very swift and slight slap (of course this is pure simile; a husband should never strike his wife). If the potion is too hot, it does more harm than good. Follow Job's example, when he said merely, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women" (Job 2:10). Mild reproof is the most likely to induce her sincere repentance (Pro 25:15).

3) He encourages her.

Praise when she does well. This is important because it will help her to realize the sincerity of your love when you must reprove, and make reproofs more convicting.

4) He comforts her.

Especially when she is hurting emotionally or physically. Elkanah's tender reasoning with Hannah brought her to dinner (1Sa 1:8-9). A husband's kind word is like medicine to his wife. Do not underestimate it.

B. In deed

1) He provides for her.

It is mainly the husband's duty to provide for his wife (Exo 21:10). She should help as she is able. The "honor" a husband must give to his wife as the weaker vessel may well refer to maintenance (1Pe 3:7; cf. Mat 15:6; 1Ti 5:3). He should make provision for her not only while he is living, but also after he is gone, as Christ did for His church. If he can, he should also give her "some pittance in her own disposal" (exact quote) so she can exercise charity and encourage servants and children in their duties.

2) He shows great tenderness to her.

This is especially shown in his protection of her from dangers, temptation, harm, reproach, contempt, and his sympathy with her in troubles.

3) He is a good example to her.

Wives usually follow their husbands to hell or to heaven. His example is a greater influence than he may realize. Solomon calls him "the guide of her youth" (Pro 2:17). Therefore set the pace in piety, seriousness, charity, wisdom, and goodness. She will learn to pray from your prayers. Your life will be a rule or law for hers.

4) He grants her reasonable requests.

Remember David granting Bathsheba her request of the throne for her son (1Ki 1:15-31), Isaac granting Rebekah her request of a godly wife for Jacob (Gen 27:46; cf. 28:1), and Jesus Christ granting the reasonable petitions of His church. A husband should be anticipating her requests, and giving her before she asks. He should seek her advice, as Elkanah and Abraham did (1Sa 1:23; Gen 21:12), and yield to her when she is right.

5) He trusts her in domestic affairs.

“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her” (Pro 31:11), especially if she has enough sense to guide domestic affairs, as she ought to have. A husband has more important things to do than direct the household servants. She may occasionally consult him so that if things do not turn out well, she may escape blame. But generally he should move in his sphere outside the home, and she in hers, within the home. He should fetch honey, and she should work it in the hive.

6) He exercises authority toward her.

The all-wise God invested the first husband with authority (Gen 2:23), and this was not taken away in his fall (Gen 3:16). The light of nature and the gospel requires this (Est 1:22; 1Co 11:3). Only proud and ignorant women dispute it. But a husband must use it:

a) wisely

He can only keep authority by a truly spiritual, serious, and manly behavior. It will be hard for her to reverence him if he does not reverence God. If he is light or effeminate, he will lose it.

b) mildly

Remember that though his position is superior, their souls are equal. She is your companion, therefore you cannot rule her as a king does his subjects, but as the head does its body. Eve was not taken from Adam’s head or foot, but from his side, near his heart. His attitude must be friendly, his language sweet, his commands sparing and respectful, and his reproofs gentle (Col 3:16). Do not think the way to keep a wife under authority is by intimidation. If meekness of wisdom will not prevail with her, then you are undone in this world, and she in the world to come.

V. The Special Duty of a Wife: Respect

This is her special qualification. If she has all beauty and learning but no respect for her husband, she is not a good wife. Creation suggests it. She was made after the man (1Ti 2:13), from the man (1Co 11:8), and for the man (1Co 11:9). This order was not by man’s doing, but God’s. Even after the fall the divine order stands: “He shall rule over you” (Gen 3:16). The New Testament confirms all this (Col 3:18; 1Pe 3:1-6). Even if she is the sweetest thing and her husband the meanest, she still has a duty to respect him. First, she must fix in her heart that her position is inferior to his, and then she will be able to fulfill all respect implies with ease and delight. It is not fitting to set the rib above, or even on the same level with, the head.

1. The Description of a Godly Wife's Respect

A. She highly esteems him.

“All the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small” (Est 1:20). Ponder the excellence of his person, and value it properly. And if he is not accomplished, then she should consider the excellence of his place as “the image and glory of God” (1Co 11:7). You esteemed him when you chose him as your husband, and you should continue to do so. Remember Michal’s disrespect to David and her punishment from God (2Sa 6:16, 23). Her family and neighbors will respect her about as much as she respects her husband, so in honoring him, she honors herself.

B. She dearly loves him.

This respect is composed of love, which is also the wife’s duty (Ti 2:4). Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, left parents, friends, and country, entirely out of love for their husbands. A young woman named Clara Cerventa was married to Valdaura whose body was so riddled with disease that no one else would touch him, but she dressed his sores with all care, and sold her attire and jewelry to maintain him. Finally he died, and when comforters came to her, she told them she would buy him back again with the loss of her five children if she could. She can beget her husband’s love no better way than by her reverence toward him.

C. She diligently pleases him.

The word “respect” in Ephesians 5:33 is literally “fear.” She should maintain “chaste conduct coupled with fear” (1Pe 3:2), for one without the other is inadequate. This fear is not servile, but a sincere desire to please and refusal to offend him. “I will do my utmost to please him, though I do not fear his hand, but his frown. I would rather displease the whole world than my husband.”

2. The Pattern of a Godly Wife's Respect

A. The church's respect for Christ

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Eph 5:22). “As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (5:24). Her submission is to be like the church’s ideal submission to Christ.

1) In everything

In things great and small, agreeable and disagreeable to her. Only when he requires what God forbids or forbids what God requires is she to refuse submission. She may reason with him in things inconvenient to her, but if he will not be persuaded, and there is no sin in the case, she must submit to him.

2) Free, willing, and cheerful

The service Christians do to the Lord is with goodwill (Eph 6:7). So the wife should submit to her husband as if there were but one will in their two hearts. Leah and Rachel followed Jacob like his shadow (Gen 31:16). Sarah’s reverence was

sincere, as she called her husband “lord” (Gen 18:12), and this is an example for Christian wives (1Pe 3:6). Therefore a grudging obedience is unacceptable, and usually springs from her unmortified pride and self-conceit. Even if he is severe, it is better for you to do your duty, and leave his judgment to God.

B. The body’s respect for the head

“For the husband is the head of the wife” (Eph 5:23). All members of the body realize the head is useful for their good. The hand will accept a wound to protect the head. Whatever the head decides to do, the body gets up and follows as long as it can. This is the way the wife should honor her husband, second only to God. It is ludicrous for the head to go one way and the rib another, for a soldier to command his general, or for the moon to pretend superiority over the sun. Only if the husband is insane is this altered. “The man has authority in his house unless he is *verbum anomalum*; that is, a fool” (Luther).

3. The Demonstration of a Godly Wife’s Respect

A. In word

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Mat 12:34). If she really respects him, it will show in what she says. “In her tongue is the law of kindness” (Pro 31:26; cf. 15:4).

1) She speaks respectfully of him in his absence.

No wife is too great or good to imitate Sarah’s godly example of giving her husband a title of respect like “lord” (1Pe 3:6). A wicked woman refers to her husband as “the man” (literal Hebrew in Pro 7:19). Would that this was the worst thing wives call their husbands behind their backs!

2) She speaks respectfully to him in his presence.

Beware of interrupting him while he is speaking, or saying ten words to his one. Silence commends a woman’s wisdom more than speech. The wise woman uses words sparingly.

Beware of using disrespectful words or tone. Strive for “a meek and quiet spirit” (1Pe 3:4). Do not be afraid that this will make your husband worse, but trust in God’s wisdom (1Pe 3:1; Pro 25:15). Remember God hears and will judge you for every idle word (Mat 12:36). Ideally, both the husband and wife should be slow to passion, yet where one must yield, it is most reasonably expected of the wife. No woman gets honor by having the last word. Some women argue that their tongue is their only weapon, but the wise know that their tongue is set on fire by hell (Jam 3:6). See how Rachel spoke rashly to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die” (Gen 30:1), and as soon as she had two, she died (Gen 35:18)! On the other hand, Abigail behaved prudently with a very bad husband, and was raised to honor. If respect will not prevail with him, anger never can. That is why the husband and wife ought to agree never to shout at one another.

B. In deed

1) She obeys his directions and restraints.

Sarah obeyed Abraham, and she is a worthy model (1Pe 3:6). He said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes" (Gen 18:6), and she did it promptly. The wife is bound in conscience to obey her husband in everything that is not contrary to the revealed will of God, and even in this case, she should refuse respectfully. For example, she cannot consent to omit Bible reading, or prayer, or sanctifying the Lord's Day, although he command it ever so sternly. The house is her proper place; she is its beauty; there is her business and safety. Only urgent necessity should call her abroad. The prostitute's feet did not abide at her house (Pro 7:11). She must live where her husband judges best. Wives are to "love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home [Greek, *oikouros*, meaning caring for the house, working at home, keeping at home and taking care of household affairs, Strong's Concordance], good, obedient to their own husbands" (Ti 2:4).

2) She asks his counsel and hears his reproofs.

Rebekah would not send Jacob to her brother Laban without consulting Isaac (Gen 27:46). Sarah would not discard Hagar the servant without consulting Abraham (Gen 21:10). The Shunammite woman would not receive a prophet into the house without advising her husband (2Ki 4:10). Her hardest task is in hearing a reproof lovingly and thankfully, especially if she has a proud and contentious spirit. But she should remember she has her faults, and no one can see them better than her husband. So to answer him harshly for reproof shows great ingratitude. If she really respects him, this will be a much easier pill to swallow.

3) She maintains a respectful and cheerful attitude at all times.

She should not indulge irritability or gloom when he is happy, nor be giddy when he is sad. She should try her best to make him delight in her. Let her express contentedness in her goods and position, and a sweet disposition so he will enjoy being at home with her. Let her study how he likes his meals, his clothes, and his lodging, and conform to his pleasure, because even in these small things many sharp arguments may arise. She must never let her familiarity with him breed contempt. His love must not make her forget her duty, but rather increase her efforts. His fondness must not decrease her respect for him. It is better to obey a wise man than a fool. Most husbands are liable to reform if their wives respect them properly. Likewise, most wives can be won to respect by his wisdom and affection.

Some will disregard all this counsel with the excuse that none can attain it, but this mocks God. He will punish all such. If His vengeance does not meet you in this life, as it often does the rebellious, then it will in another. A true Christian is marked by a fundamental submission to Biblical counsel; without this, you are mere hypocrites.

VI. How to Accomplish These Duties

1. Keep Yourself Pure before Marriage.

This will help you in the duties of marriage later. Everyone should “possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1Th 4:4). The fornicator before marriage continues his sin in marriage. Beware of lust’s first beginning, and flee it like poison. Keep your heart filled with the things of God and your body busy about your duties. The greatest fires begin with a spark. Momentary pleasure that precedes eternal torment is utter folly. If you have sinned in this way, cleanse your hearts and hands with Christ’s blood by confession to God, with fasting and prayer for His forgiveness and strength against future temptation. Get a taste of the more ravishing delights of God’s favor and promises, pardon of sin, and assurance of life and immortality. Once you have drunk from the pure spring, you will not prefer the muddy stream.

2. Choose Your Spouse Carefully.

Now that you know how difficult godly marriage is, you should be praying that He would guide you into it. Do not first love, and then consider. First consider, and then love. Let their soul be your main concern, not their looks or money. Why espouse a perpetual cross for some passing profit or delight? Marry only a Christian, the more godly the better. Consider also their personality. Speak honestly to one another about your faults and liabilities before marrying. If someone sold you a sick animal as a healthy one, you would feel cheated. How much worse is it when someone pretends to be better than they really are to secure marriage to one they profess to love!

3. Study Biblical Marriage Duties before You Have Them.

Being a godly spouse is such a big challenge that you must prepare for it well beforehand. It is no wonder that so many marriages fail! Too often the husband does not know how to rule, the wife does not know how to obey. They are both ignorant, conceited, and miserable. Therefore, parents ought to teach their children about the duties of marriage. Otherwise families which should be the nurseries of the church prove to be hotbeds of disorder and immorality. Read not only Scripture, but good books like Gouge’s treatise on *Domestic Duties*, or Mr. Bolton or Mr. Gataker or Mr. Whately. [Modern readers have many choices; we would commend Douglas Wilson’s *Reforming Marriage* by Canon Press.]

4. Resolve to Obey God without Any Reservation.

Until you are born again and made holy in your heart and conduct, you cannot please God or be a complete blessing to your spouse. You can only live together as civil pagans. The husband that truly fears God cannot remain bitter against his wife. A Bible placed between you will eliminate many differences, comfort many distresses, and guide you in many confounding circumstances. Remember God’s commands

have the highest reason, and so obedience has the greatest sweetness. Keep the Golden Rule in your marriage. Righteousness abroad will not excuse wickedness at home. When you each focus on your own duties, you will be blessed.

5. Get and Maintain True Affection for Your Spouse.

Give no place to jealousy. Do not give ear to backbiters and gossips. Jealousy often develops where true affection was lacking from the start.

6. Pray for Spiritual Graces.

A. Wisdom

A lack of wisdom causes many troubles in marriage. We need much wisdom to rule as husbands, and to submit as wives.

B. Humility

This keeps the husband from becoming a tyrant, and the wife in ready subjection to her husband. “By pride cometh contention” (Pro 13:10). A proud person could not agree with an angel; the humble will agree with anybody. Humility will also promote contentment. The humble husband and wife will say, “My spouse is far too good for such a sinful person as myself. I don’t deserve such a wonderful partner. That was a sharp reproof, but it was nothing compared to hell, which is what I deserve.” Truly humble people are easy companions.

C. Uprightness

An upright heart is needed to keep these commandments of God. An upright heart will choose the safest course, even if it is the hardest. It will suffer the worst injury rather than cause the least. It will watch against the beginnings of sin, which produce marriage’s worst troubles. The upright husband and wife will strive each to do their own duty, and will be most severe against their own failures. 🍀