

Reverencing A Husband

Ephesians 5:33b "...and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Here we see a key command for the role of a wife in the home.

This command is personal - 'HER husband.' As the wife of an evangelist, I have watched women show great respect and deference to my husband's position as a preacher. I have then watched them treat their own husband like a small child, not as the leader of themselves and their home. But God commanded every woman to reverence *her* very own husband, not anyone else's.

In direct interactions with your husband and with others concerning him, show respect and reverence. How do you talk to him, privately and publicly? How do you talk to your mom or your best friend about him? What does your body language say? What impression are you giving your children, whether small or grown, of your husband, their father?

Also, consider carefully how your own appearance and behavior make him appear in other's eyes, both in the home and in public. A woman who loosely flirts with every male in church, although she may not have spoken a direct word against her husband, is clearly showing a complete lack of honor and respect to her husband. A sloppy woman with a sloppy house is doing her husband no favors either. Your reputation has a direct impact on his. Are you crowning him or shaming him? Are you doing him good or evil? Are you wisely building your house?

Proverbs 12:4 "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones."

Proverbs 31:12 "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

Proverbs 14:1 "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands."

This command is unconditional. There are no "if he..., then you" conditions written here. God, who has known your husband and your marriage since the beginning of time told you and me to 'reverence her husband.' I do understand that there are husbands that do not deserve reverence. (There are also wives who are not behaving in a lovable way, but would we want their husbands to stop loving them?!) Some husbands are rarely worthy of respect, and all husbands, being human (as are their wives), at times behave less-than-respectably. This is why, when we are deciding whether or not to follow the command of Ephesians 5:33, it is helpful to notice Ephesians 5:22: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as unto the Lord*." Reverence is ultimately to the Lord. Your husband is the vehicle, the physical vessel by whom you do it unto Christ. When the offering plate is passed in church, do you examine the quality of the plate to decide whether or not you'll give? Do you determine the amount of your offering based on the fineness of the plate? No, the quality and worthiness of the plate is irrelevant. You are giving to the Lord, not to the plate. Your husband is the offering plate by which your reverence, obedience, and submission get to God. The quality of the 'plate' is irrelevant. Your obedience unto God in revering your husband is as much an act of worship as is singing praises or tithing. As you revere your husband irrespective of your feelings or his behavior at the moment, you offer this act as obedience to God. May I add that the only way to reverence your husband as unto Christ is to do so *through* Christ. (See the articles on Grace.)

This command is purposeful. Ephesians 5:33 - "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife **see that** she reverence her husband." "**See that**" means '**Do it on purpose**.' To which of us fallen daughters of Eve does reverence for our own husband come naturally? None, no one. All of us, if we will be honest, naturally disrespect authority, including our closest authority. So if we will reverence our husband, it will be because we are making

a purposeful, ongoing **choice**.

Perhaps the idea of practical reverence can be captured this way: think of someone whom you would be awed to have in your home - for example, the president or a great hero of the faith like Hudson Taylor. The ways that come to mind to act (and not act) towards and treat a person like that are ways that we can show the same respect to our husbands. If I had someone like that in my home, I would be attentive, seek to anticipate and meet their needs, prepare what I think they would like. If I had to ask them to do or not do something, I would take care how I worded my request, assuming they meant well. To help us make this **choice**, here are some practical ways to show reverence:

- Praise him to himself and others, both at home and in public.
- Serve him as you would an honored guest.
- Ask his advice and opinions as from a wise and trusted counselor.
- Tell positive stories about him (but never the negative ones).
- Change your internal thoughts about him from criticism to praise. Choose to mentally admire him as someone great. Focus on his strengths, not his weakness.
- If it's important to him, make it important to you.
- Respect his wishes.
- Honor his requests.
- Listen attentively no matter what it is he's wanting to talk about.
- Don't let the children or yourself interrupt him. Give him precedence in conversations.
- Respond to his desires above the children's. They can wait.
- Notice, and verbally appreciate, what he *does* do. The paycheck always comes straight home, it never stops at the bar first. He makes a point of being at the children's games. The car's gas tank is always topped off. Or whatever it is that *your* husband is so great at. Be frequently and openly grateful for what he does.

Now, if you're saying that these things are unreasonable, let me ask you – would it be unreasonable if your husband treated you in this manner? *But let me encourage you by letting you in on a secret* - your reverence and respect encourages and enables him to step up to the leadership plate.

So then, wife, see that you reverence your husband.