

Family Upreach, Inc.

Course V: *Christian Marriage Skills*

"The Christian Couple: His Role/Her Role"

Lesson Eight

The Christian Marriage
**THE CHRISTIAN COUPLE:
HIS ROLE-
HER NEEDS**

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Unit 19 – Lesson 2

(NewLife Behavior English Edition)

NewLife 
B E H A V I O R
Ministries

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"If any person be in Christ, he is a new creature . . . "
(Second Corinthians 5:17)

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RESPONSE SHEET

Dear Student,

We have found that thoughtful *written* responses greatly enhance the student's understanding of this course material. Therefore, we urge you to use this **Response Sheet** as an aid in the study of this lesson.



STEP 1: BEFORE YOU START

Before you start, please write three or four sentences below on how you view the role of the husband and the needs of a wife in a Christian marriage. Then, put this sheet out of sight until you finish the lesson.

STEP 2: PREPARING TO STUDY

Read the Study Questions on pages 11-12 (do not attempt to answer them now). Then read and study pages 3-10 as you would a chapter of a book.

THE CHRISTIAN COUPLE: HIS ROLE – HER NEEDS

In this lesson we will study the headship role of the husband in a Christian marriage and the needs of the wife that he is to meet. Understanding and desiring to do God's will helps us to persevere.

Before continuing, write some of your understanding of your views on the role of the husband in a Christian marriage, and a word or two on the needs of the wife (using the Response Sheet section on Page 2). Then put it out of your sight until the end of this lesson. Read the entire lesson through once without looking up the scriptures. Finally, go back for a more in-depth study before completing the Study Questions on Pages 11-12.

I. Introduction

This lesson for the Christian couple has three parts. We will begin with a Bible study from Ephesians, Chapter 5, giving foundational concepts for marriage. It will be followed by a discussion of the role of the husband. Then we will explore the needs of the wife which the husband needs to help supply. Not only will this study provide a more complete understanding but a clearer picture as to how these subjects are interrelated.



You may get your Bible out and turn to Ephesians 5:22-33 as we begin.

II. Husbands, Wives, Christ and the Church in Ephesians (Chapter 5)

Paul used the symbol of the relationship between a husband and wife in this passage to teach valuable lessons about Christ's relationship to His body – the church. When we get a clear view of this subject, we can also receive beneficial instruction in the *reverse*

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application . . . the Christian marital relationship. A brief study of the Scripture gives light on both of these vital topics.

- A. Christ and the church – like husbands and wives – are bound together in the Word of God. If you ever thought that the church is non-essential in God’s scheme of things . . . *guess again!* The church is defined in Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 3:8-10, and First Timothy 3:15.

God intended it to be an international body of the saved (Galatians 3:26-28). This is in direct opposition to the “world” (Colossians 1:13-14). The church belongs exclusively to GOD (First Peter 2:9).

- B. In Ephesians, Chapter 5, Christ is the “head” of the church . . . as the husband is the “head” of the wife. This “headship” (authority) is God-given and complete (Ephesians 1:15-23). The church is Christ’s fullness and His effective tool for service in the world (Ephesians 1:23).

Jesus is the Savior of this body of obedient, penitent believers (Ephesians 5:23). Christ is the “head” and “Savior” of the church. The church is the *subject* and that which is *saved*. See First Corinthians 12:12-27 for the symbol of the “head” and “body” (also, Romans 12:4ff).

- C. Christ gave Himself for the church (Ephesians 5:25-27). His love was made vividly evident in His total sacrifice on the Cross (Acts 20:28).



The purpose for giving Himself for His bride (the church) was to “sanctify” and “cleanse” her in order that she might be related to Him in purity. As we are cleansed as God’s children (John 3:5; Matthew 28:19; Titus 3:4-5), God adds us to His church (Acts 2:41, 47). We then become part of Christ’s glorious companion. As Christ exemplifies His sacrificial love in giving Himself for the church – the sacrificial example of loving is modeled for all God-approved husbands.

- D. Christ is also revealed as the Nurturer and Provider for His bride, the church (Ephesians 5:28-30). “Nourishing” means that He spiritually strengthens and develops the church as seen in First Peter 2:2, First Corinthians 3:2 and Hebrews 5:10-14. Following Christ’s example, a husband is to be a nurturer and provider for his wife and family.

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Christ, in cherishing the church, holds her in great esteem and highly values her – caring for her and treating her tenderly – assuring her of His constant affection and attention (Matthew 28:20). Christ is depicted in Ephesians 5:30 as “one flesh” with His church-bride. In this same way, husbands are to love their wives as “Christ loved the church.”

III. Authority Versus Authoritarianism

God expects the man to be the primary “lead” person in the marital relationship. Doing his job like God wants it done casts the man in Christ-like proportions . . . giving him a hint of the *glorious nature* of the “husband” role he has accepted in Christ.

The primary question after reading the Scriptures would be . . . “How does a husband who is *the head of the wife* – exercise this headship?”



Most of the difficulty in this area springs from an improper understanding of the leadership role the husband needs to practice. The problem (all too often) is that men have seen *authoritarianism* modeled instead of the authority God expects men to wield.

Here are some symptoms of authoritarianism . . .

1. The husband lacks interest in his wife’s input and disregards her feelings. Too often men confuse “head” with being the “boss.” For many husbands it is easier to be the “boss” than to be the *head*. “Boss” does not require love and protection. The “head” means the husband provide both love and protection.
2. He forbids the children to discuss his decisions and is reluctant to let them make their own decisions as they get older.
3. He trusts very few people.
4. He displays an intense need to control those closest to him.

What “headship” does NOT mean . . .

- That the husband and father is “boss” or tyrant. **Jesus, our Supreme Example, never was this way (Matthew 11:28-30; 23:37).**
- That the husband is a lawmaker or law enforcer.
- That the husband is better than, superior to, wiser than, or more intelligent than . . . his wife.
- That the husband should make decisions without his wife being considered and involved in the decision-making process (**First Corinthians 7:5**).

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BIBLICAL “headship” is defined as . . .



1. Biblical headship for a husband is “giving the best of all that he is” to those under his care and authority.
2. “Headship” is a means of serving others (Mark 10:42-44). We must understand that service is its essential function. This does not mean that one in “headship” is under the authority of those he serves or that he takes orders from them.
3. As *head*, a husband serves his family by giving intelligent, sensitive leadership. “Headship” is not for dominating or stifling his wife or children but for leading, protecting, providing and caring for them.
4. “Headship” means – in the marital relationship – that the husband has God-ordained authority and the primary responsibility to lead the family.

At this point, men may feel a bit unsure as to how to lead or respond in any given situation. Since the Apostle Paul uses the term “just as” when he compares our marital relationship with the relationship between Jesus and His bride, the church - it would be best if we take our cue from Jesus. Husbands should strive to lead as Jesus did. In doing so, the husband will accept and fulfill his leadership role in a respectful and responsible manner.

Consider the leadership style of Jesus:

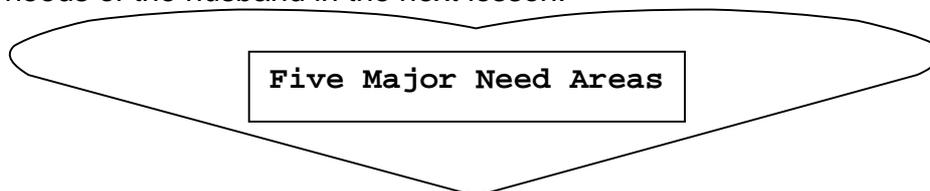
- **By Example.** Jesus was the embodiment of all He taught. He put His teachings on the line by following them perfectly in the life He lived. Our place, like Jesus, is to step out in front of our wife and family and - BE the example!
- **By Authority.** Jesus taught as “one having authority” (Matthew 7:28-29). God created marriage knowing that any grouping of two or more persons will require that one be in authority. In Ephesians, Chapter 5, this principle is clearly prescribed by the Holy Spirit.
- **By Listening.** Jesus did not just listen in order to answer. Listening was our Lord’s way to show respect and concern for individuals as well as their pain. Husband – listen to your wife. She has eyes to see things you do not see.
 - a. She has a mind that assimilates information with a different perspective.

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- b. She has a heart with sensitivities that you do not possess.
- c. She has a personality with strengths that offset your weaknesses. Do yourself a favor and use your ears and heart before acting arbitrarily. If you fail to listen, you will still be the “head” but you will be wrong nonetheless.
- **By Questions.** Jesus – the master of asking and answering questions – would like for you to consider learning some skills in this area. As “head” of the family, you need all the truth that you can get (from all sources). We don’t need to feel defensive or hostile when questions arise. Arrogance will only limit the information we need. This is no time to be blaming, accusing or self-justifying. Asking good questions might just serve to show you how to lead properly.
- **By Speaking to the Issue at Hand.** We often “beat about the bush” and fail to communicate clearly. Chuck Swindoll defines “accountability” as “a willingness to explain your actions.” Husbands and wives need to be mutually accountable. Deal with the present pressing issue. Be willing to explain your actions and motivations (*if you know them*). Those you are leading deserve to know.
- **By Compassion, Mercy and Understanding.** Jesus uses such characteristics as He leads the church. He also uses mercy, grace and forgiveness. If you are having trouble being a proper leader of your wife and family . . . try putting into practice these qualities. Using the strategies of the Master, you will not fail!

IV. Meeting Her Needs

The lady of your life has definite needs that only her husband can fill. By being “head of the wife”, great responsibility is attached to the husband to see to it that those needs are properly met. Meeting her needs supercedes meeting your own needs. She (in her role as the “heart” of the family) will help meet your needs as well. We will consider meeting the specific needs of the husband in the next lesson.



Willard Harley (in his book, His Needs-Her Needs) points out five major need areas that a husband should pursue if he intends to make his marriage “affair-proof.” These are listed here for your consideration:

- A. **Affection.** This is one thing your wife cannot do without. For the wife, “affection” is the *environment of the marriage* and not just sex (which is an event). This may be different from the way typical males look at it but the wise man will learn HER needs and views.

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- B. **Conversation**. Harley suggests that your wife needs you to talk to her – like you talked to her when you were courting. If you don't, some other fellow may talk like that to her, with undesirable consequences for you.
- C. **Honesty and Openness**. The wife needs to be able to trust her husband – totally. The health of your integrity is central to your ability to meet her needs.
- D. **Financial Support**. Any wife needs enough money to live comfortably even if it takes two jobs. Her establishment of a “haven” for you to return to at the end of the day is dependent on her ability to manage the home properly and efficiently.
- E. **Family Commitment**. One of your wife's greatest needs is for you to be a good father and leader in properly rearing your children. She can do a creditable job without you but children really *thrive* when the father carries a major part of the load. This is a task that God designed for two.

But the clearest and most complete listing of needs of the Christian wife is found in the workbook, Intimate Encounters – produced by Minirth-Meier Clinic and a work of the Fergusons and Thurmans. They skillfully use the acronym: S – P – E – C – I – A – L. It is used to list the seven major needs of the wife. We will take a few liberties with their writing and include a few suggestions of our own.

HERE IS A LIST OF THE WIFE'S SEVEN MAJOR NEEDS:

1. **Security**. Security is defined as “freedom from threats of danger or pain; safe, certain and sure of one's safety.” We might add that the wife needs confidence in the harmony of the relationship. She must feel free from harm (Mark 9:40). Countless fears arise in marriage and the husband will do well to prevent or remove their causes.



2. **Protected**. The wife needs the husband's protection specifically in areas of vulnerability. She needs to feel protected and that she has a refuge. Vulnerability stems from areas of pressure, family finance, and child rearing. Other sensitive areas: her weight, appearance, shyness, education and job skills. She needs your support and understanding. Be her defender – not her accuser or blamer.
3. **Enjoyed**. She needs to sense that you enjoy her company and look forward to spending time with her. Spending this precious time together is best done when it is evident that you enjoy her and HER activities.

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4. **Courted**. Remember when you courted her? Return to treating your wife “special” – as a person of immeasurable worth. It is the husband’s responsibility to take the initiative in bringing this off in whatever ways he can and as best he can. The best that can be done is to look for new and better ways to express the genuineness of your love. Think about it!
5. **Intimacy**. Your wife needs the freedom to share all of herself in body, soul and spirit with her husband. To meet her needs requires your commitment to give (not *take*) in the deep sharing and communion necessary here (First John 1:7). Find a way to express to her your acceptance, approval, encouragement and respect. Rewards that will come certainly outweigh the effort involved. Remember, being “one flesh”, involves infinitely more than physical intimacy. The physical has its place in the larger scope of everything but it is more the “spice” than the *nourishment*.



6. **Appreciation**. The husband needs to discover and express gratefulness for what his wife does and who she IS as his partner and friend. Learning how another blesses us requires getting to know that individual intimately. It means so much to communicate personal gratitude for her with sincere words and genuine feelings (First Corinthians 11:2).
7. **Led**. The husband’s role as a leader encompasses initiative, direction and example as he lovingly serves his wife. Remember that Biblical leadership has nothing to do with demanding or taking but has everything to do with *servicing* and *giving*. You exert leadership of a profound nature in working to establish family goals and help heal hurts quickly anywhere in your family. As the leader, the husband is to take a stand on primary Christian family values that bring strength to all family relationships.

Examine your convictions and standards. What disciplines do you practice in your personal life? Isn’t it about time for you to begin modeling these for your family? Wives find it greatly encouraging when they are able to be the follower in this area (rather than having to take the lead). No woman minds being in submission to any man who takes the high moral ground (just as the spiritual church has no problem submitting to the headship and leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ).

V. Conclusion

It will make for a very interesting conversation if you seek to discover her most important needs at the time. In this study, we have listed areas of need for the *general* female population as studied by professional researchers.

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Remember: *your* situation is unique. Your wife is not the “average” spouse. She is an individual and “special”. She has her own specific needs.

She might be willing to share them with you IF you genuinely desire to know them.

Lovingly let her know of your desire to become all that she needs you to be as the “leader” of your family.



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Session #8

STUDY QUESTIONS

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

1. The type of marriage I desire is one in which
 - (a) I am the boss
 - (b) all I must do is make money
 - (c) I care for my spouse's needs
 - (d) I can just relax

2. In the 5th chapter of Ephesians, what is important?
 - (a) Christ and the church
 - (b) Christ in the family
 - (c) Husband and wife
 - (d) All of these

3. The Bible teaches that the husband
 - (a) is the *head*, not the *boss*
 - (b) has all authority
 - (c) should not be questioned
 - (d) is always right

4. The "head" of the family is
 - (a) the King
 - (b) untouchable
 - (c) responsible
 - (d) the oldest male child

5. Jesus led by
 - (a) intimidation
 - (b) threatening
 - (c) example
 - (d) indifference

6. As the head of the family, the husband gives
 - (a) leadership
 - (b) service
 - (c) protection and provision
 - (d) all of these

7. A basic need of a wife is
 - (a) a roof over her head
 - (b) money in the bank
 - (c) affection
 - (d) high social standing

8. Separated, what can I do?
 - (a) Give up
 - (b) Send money
 - (c) Communicate and develop trust
 - (d) Nothing

9. Over the past 12 months I feel my most improved area is
 - (a) finances
 - (b) education
 - (c) deeper gratitude for my spouse
 - (d) sexual gratification.

10. When reunited, I will remember that “headship” means
 - (a) trusting
 - (b) sharing
 - (c) communicating
 - (d) all of these

REFLECTION

Write a few sentences about new ideas you have learned about the husband's role and needs of a wife in a Christian marriage.

APPLYING THE LESSON

Finally, to get the most from your study, list one or more ideas that you want to use to change your behavior. Also, list questions you want to ask your instructor or studymate.