

A Word to Wives

A Call to Respect Husbands



Patti Brown

“Wives honor your husbands...” How many times have we, as women, read that verse and thought no more of it? Of course, we respect our husbands—as long as they treat us well, don’t engage in immoral behavior and take out the trash. But what is that verse *really* saying?

In Ephesians 5:21-23 (*The Message*), we’re told, “Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your respect for Christ.” That’s right—*ways that show our respect for Christ*. Just let that echo in your mind for a while. I am to show respect for my husband, not because he’s earned it, but because it mirrors my respect for Christ.

How do I respect Christ? Is it by undermining Him? Is it through showing Him how I think things are to be done? Do I convey to the Lord that I have the monopoly on wisdom? Of course not, yet when I disrespect my husband that is the message I give. Sounds like quite an expectation from God, doesn’t it? How are we, as mere mortal women with our own needs and struggles, supposed to respect our husbands when they often treat us in ways we interpret as unloving?

The response is that we can’t. We cannot do it under our own power, with our own resources. We can only show respect in ways that show our respect for Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. God sets no conditions under which we are allowed to hold back our respect for Him and He sets no conditions for allowing us

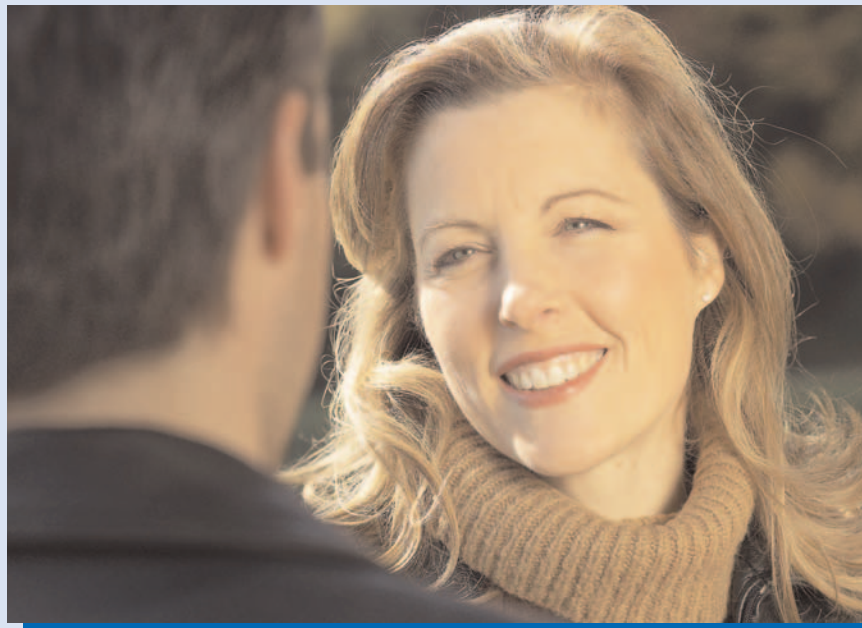
to overtly or subtly show disrespect for our husbands. Let’s not fall into the trap of self-righteousness. Be very careful not to communicate in subtle ways that your husband has nothing of value to offer, especially in situations that involve your children. This is a dangerous attitude to convey to them.

As wives, we need to pray. Ask God to provide the power to show the kind of Holy-Spirit-empowered respect He desires from you toward your husband. It is important to extend this kind of respect even when we believe our husbands don’t deserve it at the moment.

The kind of respect I’m talking about is not in response to ongoing emotional or physical abuse. If you or your family are experiencing that kind of abuse, you need to seek counsel and professional help. But, the respect the Bible calls us to as wives is extended even when our husbands disappoint us or don’t meet the needs we wish they would. This kind of respect is a symbol of sacrificial love that reflects Christ.

Ask the Lord to reveal to you those times when you have dismissed your husband’s advice, rolled your eyes or

given other clues that indicate you believe his input isn’t valuable. Take heart in knowing that as you show your husband respect, you are also showing respect for the Lord and living in obedience to Him. An impossible task? Without God’s power—yes. With His power—you’ll be amazed!



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