

The Husband's Counterpart to Submission

Introduction:

1. We learned that while submission is not the wife's core role in marriage, it is a godly response to her husband's role as a servant/leader. It energizes him in his role.
2. We also learned that the wife's core role is one of helper, husband-lover, and child-lover.
3. Does the husband have a godly response to **his** wife's role that will affirm and energize her? The Bible clearly teaches that the husband's response should be one of **praise**.
4. Husbands must understand its importance and power as a response to their wives' role.
 - **1 Peter 3:7** teaches that husbands are to honor their wives. What does this mean in practical terms?
 - You treat her with respect and dignity. Nurture, encourage, and praise her as a person with thoughts, feelings, and volition. Place her right beside you, equal in value and importance.
 - Stand by her, and remind her that apart from her, you and your family could not make it - not well. She is the critical difference!
5. **Proverbs 31:27-30** is a key passage that describes the husband's response to his wife's core role.
6. Just as her submission frees the husband to carry out **his** role as a godly leader in the home, his praise of her will free and empower her to fulfill **her** role.
7. Both responses - submission and praise, are life-giving to your marriage.
8. A wife needs and deserves praise - and a lot of it.
 - She should constantly receive honor and affirmation from you for the "husband-loving" and "child-loving" support that she imparts.
 - Nobody can really appreciate or know her value like you can.
 - You had better constantly tell your wife how important she is and how significant is her awesome power of "being there" for you and your children.
 - If not, she will most likely feel the way too many women feel - that her support is either not needed or not important.
9. A lack of submission is not the root problem in most marriages today.
 - Men, you are the leader and your wife responds to **your** leadership. If you provide selfish, dictatorial, self-serving leadership, don't be surprised if you get a less than godly response from your wife.
 - But when you strive to exemplify servant/leadership and respond to her role with praise, you will be surprised at how many of your marriage problems will disappear.
10. You may be sitting here thinking, so what do I do? How do I go about praising her (flowers, touchy-feely notes, buy her candy, shopping day at the mall, etc.)?
 - These ideas are great, but random and occasional acts of kindness cannot substitute praise on an everyday basis.
 - Without an everyday form of praise and honor, special moments can ring hollow, and maybe even appear a bit manipulative.

- But when it's present every day, then it's obvious you really do mean it.
11. So, how can a husband praise his wife on an everyday basis? **Ephesians 5:28-30** offers two specific ways a man can honor and praise his wife in the day-to-day living of married life.

Equal treatment - the everyday way to honor.

1. **Illustration:** living from the head up.
2. **Ephesians 5:28** teaches that Christ-like love means treating your wife with the same respect, concern, and care as you give yourself.
 - "As your own body" means to love your wife by treating her equally.
 - It doesn't mean treating her like a man.
3. So what does equal treatment look like?
 - Compare the vehicle you drive to the one she drives.
 - How about the time you have to yourself versus the time she has to herself?
 - What memberships is she able to enjoy? What hobbies is she able to pursue? How much money is budgeted for her personal use as compared to yours? What opinions is she free to express? What kind of language are your children allowed to use with her?
 - How are the in-laws and your friends permitted to treat her? What limits are placed on the amount of stress she has to put up with? What preference is given to her tastes in music, sports, decorating, furniture, vacations, food, etc.?
4. So often a husband will order the family in terms of **his** priorities and preferences, but neglect his wife completely. He treats her like a second-class citizen.
5. This is unequal treatment, and no extravagant material gift for a birthday or anniversary will make up for it.

Constant comment - the everyday way to honor.

1. **Ephesians 5:29** teaches that a man gives ongoing, regular care and attention to his body (shaving, brushing teeth, combing hair, etc.). Try neglecting to do these things for the next 40 years.
2. With the same constancy and regularity, a man should express love and appreciation to his wife. **Illustration:** combing hair.
3. A woman not only needs constant love, she needs to be **told** she is loved constantly.
 - One night of celebration and affection (a note on your anniversary or an arrangement of flowers on her birthday) isn't going to cut it.
 - It's not that she is psychologically weak or emotionally crippled. Not at all. Rather, that affirmation opens and nourishes her soul, and helps her grow and develop into all that God intends for her to be.
 - It keeps her encouraged to keep doing what is right and best for the family.
4. Husbands, your wives will thrive on praise, but not on manipulation. If you try to butter her up with sweet words so you can get your own way, she'll see right through it. Even if she doesn't, that is no way to treat her. It is deceptive and unhealthy.
5. Christ-like love is not manipulative. Instead it means treating your wife equally and constantly with the same care and concern you give yourself.

In Conclusion:

1. Nobody can give the wife the honor and praise she deserves except the husband. No one else's praise matters quite as much.
2. By our everyday words and actions, we must communicate to our wives that we value who they are and what they do.
3. They have perhaps the most awesome assignment under heaven - to "be there" for us and our children. They need to know we sincerely believe that, too.