

Scripture: John 13:1-20

Pastor Wayne

Memory Verse: John 13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

The traditional rolls for households for many years has been that the husband is the breadwinner who goes to work every day to support the family and the wife is the one who stays at home and does all of the chores like making the food, washing the dishes, and cleaning the house. This division of labor worked very well until more and more women started working and some even became the primary breadwinners.

We can debate whether wives working outside the home is a good thing or a bad thing, Although I think the traditional roles line up better with the Biblical model and it is clearly better for especially small children to have one parent at home, I don't think there is a one-size fits all. There are clearly examples of women working in the Bible including the Proverbs 31 woman.

From my personal experience, the greatest problem with both spouses working is that both are tired when they get home and neither has the time or the energy to do all of the chores. My wife was a stay at home mom for most of our married life. I could justify coming home and crashing on the couch to watch the news while she prepared dinner and took care of everything else. Now, when we both come home from a long day at the office I cannot expect her to do it all by herself.

Whether your wife works or not, it doesn't hurt for us men to put on an apron and help out! If you are both working then the chores should be 50/50. If one is not working or working less hours then they should be willing to take on more of the responsibility. Even if your wife is not working it is still a good idea to serve her. We have a perfect example of that in our passage today!

Jesus put on an apron (girded himself) and took on a very non-traditional job for Himself, especially knowing who He was. Washing the guests feet was something the disciples should have done. Jesus became the servant. He set the example and established a standard for His disciples and I believe He set a precedent for us as husbands as well. Ephesians clearly tells us that we are to be like Christ in our love for our wives. Perhaps the most Christ-like thing that you can do today is to put on an apron and wash the dishes!

Meditation: Think about ways that you can serve your wife and children.

Assignment: Sit down together as a couple and discuss the traditional rolls. Decide which she should do, which ones he should do, which ones are better done together, and what the kids can take care of.

Just for Fun: Go to the store and find some crazy, fun aprons for both of you (and the kids) to wear when doing your chores.

Scripture: I Samuel 25:1-3

Pastor Wayne

Memory Verse: Proverbs 11:29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool *shall be* servant to the wise of heart.

There used to be a popular radio program called “The Rest of the Story” by Paul Harvey. This is one of those devotions where you need to read the rest of the story in I Samuel 25:1-44. There is an important lesson for husbands in this passage. Nabal was everything a husband should not be. Because of his attitude and actions he and his wife were not working together as the Lord intended. It ultimately resulted in the death of their marriage in a very literal way.

The story is that Nabal was a wealthy landowner with many sheep and goats. David was camped out nearby with his little Army. He and his men would watch over Nabal’s flocks and protect them against thieves and marauding bands. David asked Nabal for some food to help him feed his men while they were protecting him. Nabal refused to give anything to David and even insulted David in the process. David decided he wasn’t going to take that from anybody, especially Nabal and he was on his way to kill him. Nabal’s wife, Abigail, heard about what Nabal had done and went behind his back to bring food to David and to apologize for her husband’s actions. She stopped a war from starting and saved her husband’s life and all of their servants. When he heard about what she did he got so upset he had a heart attack and died.

There are lessons in this story for both the husband and the wife. Nabal was a fool both in name (Nabal means fool in Hebrew) and in action. The Bible tells us he was “churlish and evil”. Churlish means he was severe and harsh. Evil describes the things that he did. “Doings” in verse 3, means that it was his practice or habit to do evil. Later on we find him celebrating with a feast fit for a king when he had told David’s men he had barely enough to feed his workers. He got drunk and when he found out what his wife had done he had a fit and ended up dead.

Many husbands are like Nabal. They are foolish and harsh even with their own wife. That is clearly the way Nabal was because she wasn’t surprised by what he did and she didn’t bother trying to reason with him before taking things in her own hands. That kind of behavior doesn’t happen overnight. She had learned a long time before that there was no reasoning with her husband and probably had felt and observed his churlish behavior more than once.

Abigail was a woman of “good understanding” but she was wrong to bypass her husband’s authority without at least talking to him first. I understand why she didn’t and by this point in her marriage she probably felt she couldn’t and was probably right. Yes the result was good, but the end doesn’t justify the means. The Bible is clear about the roles of leadership and submission. Don’t let your marriage get to this point! Husbands, the lesson for us is when we are harsh and unwilling to listen to our wives it will lead them to stop communicating or listening to us. Like Nabal, we will pay the price! He would have been wise to consult his wise wife and to listen to her. Don’t be a fool!

Meditation: Think about how you communicate with your spouse and what you might be doing that discourages them from communicating with you.

Assignment: Discuss how you can better communicate with each other. Give your spouse the freedom to be honest with you about your shortcomings in this area.

Just for Fun: Look up what your names mean and talk about how you want to live up to (or not) to your name.

Scripture: I Peter 3:1-7

Pastor Wayne

Memory Verse: Wife - I Peter 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives. Husband – I Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

The word “likewise” means “equally in the same way”. In other words, “What’s good for the goose is good for the gander”. This passage is usually emphasized for the woman and not the man. Certainly the major emphasis is on the wife in verses 1-6, but there is plenty here for both husband and wife!

Let’s start with the wives since that is where Peter started: Peter reminds the wives that the greatest beauty tip for a woman is not to put on fancy jewelry or buying the latest fashion or getting your hair styled. Put on subjection! Now don’t get Peter wrong. There is nothing ungodly with getting a new hairstyle, even if your husband doesn’t notice. A new dress can be just the thing you need to pick you up and make you feel special but most husbands are more interested in what’s in the dress than what it looks like. A little bling is ok as long as you don’t overdo it (I Timothy 2:9). Just realize that a closet full of the latest fashions and a jewelry box containing a fortune in jewels and gold is not worth anywhere near as much as a meek and quiet spirit.

Meek is not weak and it certainly doesn’t mean that you don’t speak up or have an opinion about anything. Meekness is power under control. A meek wife understands the power that she has to influence her husband and to help guide him to make the right decisions. A quiet spirit is not someone who never speaks up or voices an opinion. The word quiet means to “have in hand or to have control.” We need a strong wife that is controlled by the Spirit and not by her emotions or own will.

Men, verse 7 tells us “likewise”. That means we need to learn to be meek and quiet as well. We need to honor or value our wife’s opinion and not break her spirit. We can only do this through knowledge and understanding both the Word of God and our wife in particular.

We are in this together as “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.” (Romans 8:17) We should be working together for the same goals both in this life and the life to come. The best thing that you can do for your wife is to pray for her and to pray with her about whatever the need or the problem is.

Meditation: Wives think about how you can put on true beauty every day and husbands meditate on ways that you can show your wife that you value them.

Assignment: Share with your wife the non-physical things that make her beautiful to you. Tell your husband the things that he does that make you feel valued.

Just for Fun: Spend the day calling him Lord and calling her Lady. Maybe even bow or curtsy to each other when you address them.

Scripture: Genesis 12:11-20

Pastor Wayne

Memory Verse: I Peter 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Abraham is one of the heroes of the Bible. He and Sarah are given a whole section of God's Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11. All of Romans 4 is written about his great faith in God. In James 2:23 it says that Abraham was "called the Friend of God". And Abraham was a jerk! What kind of husband tells his wife to hide the fact that they were married and allows another man, on at least two different occasions (Genesis 20:1-18) to take his wife from him and one of them to take her possibly even to his bedroom! She was not raped only because God intervened. Abraham did not say or do anything to stop it and in fact he instigated it out of fear for his own life.

Reading this story both disgusts me and encourages me. It disgusts me because I cannot imagine a man standing by and do nothing to protect his wife's purity and honor. It encourages me because I think of the stupid things that I have done to my wife and the fact that God could forgive Abraham and Sarah could still respect him, gives me hope!

Some of you are thinking, "I would never do anything like that to my wife." Maybe not what Abraham did, but you are very likely guilty of publically humiliating her or compromising her purity and honor in some way. How? Let me give you some examples:

- A husband asks his wife to dress immodestly in public, exposing her secret places to other men so that he can show her off or for a cheap turn-on for himself.
- A man's eyes wander when he is with his wife looking at other women instead of keeping his eyes only for her.
- Looking at pornography, sending her the message that "Your body is not good enough to satisfy me. I need more."
- Worse yet, asking your wife to look at that pornography with you. It is like asking her to bring another woman to bed with you.
- Publically discussing the intimate details of your married life, especially when you are being critical of her.
- Acting like you are not married in the way you flirt with other women.
- Making jokes about her, especially about her physical appearance or personal details.

There are other ways that we can be jerks like Abraham was. I think you get the picture. It was bad enough that Abraham did this once, but he did it again! Not only that, his son committed the same sin as his father. Fellows, what hurts our wives even more is when we keep doing the same things over and over again. Determine that you will never again put your wife in compromising or embarrassing position publically or privately. Apologize to her for past failures and ask her to forgive you. Don't be a jerk!!!

Meditation: Think about things that you have done or said that have or are dishonoring your wife whether publically or privately and determine how you are going to change them.

Assignment: Discuss with her how and when you have embarrassed her. Apologize and make a commitment to change,

Just for Fun: Look for ways to publically honor her this week. Try to make her blush in modesty instead of with shame!

Scripture: Genesis 26:6-13

Pastor Wayne

Memory verse: Proverbs 5:19 *Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.*

Do you like sports? Maybe you enjoy team sports like football, soccer, baseball, or basketball. Others may prefer the individual sports where it is just you and one other player like tennis or racquetball. My all time favorite sport is with my wife! I like the kind of sporting that Jacob was doing with Rebekah his wife in Genesis 26:8. That is a game where both of you come away as winners!

In yesterdays devotion we learned that Abraham was being a jerk by letting people think his wife was his sister and taking her away from him, even to their bed. Even though Isaac never saw his dad do this, he somehow picked up the same bad habit. Exodus 20:5, “I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me.” Your children will pick up your bad habits, even when you think they don’t know about them, especially if you don’t confess and repent of them. That, however, is a lesson for another time and another place.

I want to focus in on one of the good things in this passage – Isaac “sporting” with his wife. The word sporting means “to laugh, to jest, to toy with, to play”. It does not by itself carry a sexual connotation to it, except in the context of the story, whatever they were doing together made Abimelech know for sure that they were not brother and sister!

God says that “Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Hebrews 13:14). God dedicated the book of Song of Solomon to a very descriptive narrative of a married couple making love. In Proverbs 5:18-19 God encourages us to rejoice (be glad), be ravished (intoxicated, out of control) and satisfied (satiated & saturated) with our wife (or husband as the case may be). I’ve seen some fans get out of control during a game and God encourages us to bring that same “fan”atic enthusiasm to the bedroom! Game on!

I don’t think that Isaac and Rebekah were engaging in sexual foreplay right out in public. This is clearly one area of our lives that is very personal and private and we should never expose our intimate lives to the world. The expression “Get a room!” applies to married couples as well. Don’t embarrass yourself or other people by getting too personal in public. In the bedroom or the privacy of your home is another matter. Get excited and enjoy the sport to it’s fullest.

Although they were not being too intimate it is obvious that they were not acting like a brother and sister would, but more like lovers. I hope that when people see Diane and I together that it is obvious to them that we are madly in love with each other even after 39 years together. What about you?

Mediation: Meditate on the physical relationship in marriage. Why did God create it for us? What does He want to accomplish through it in our lives? Are we fulfilling his purpose in this area?

Assignment: Talk about your sexual relationship. What makes it fun? Are you rejoicing, ravished, and satisfied with this part of your marriage? How can you improve it for each other?

Just for Fun: Make your intimate relationship a team sport for the two of you. Maybe you could get matching jerseys, choose a team mascot, have a team cheer, etc.. Come on – Have some fun and get excited. Maybe you even will score tonight!!!!

Scripture: Matthew 5:43-48

Pastor Wayne

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.

My wife carries an umbrella with her almost everywhere she goes. Many time I have had to wait for her while she ran to get her umbrella. I would look out at the sky and ask her why she needed an umbrella because there were no clouds. Her answer would almost invariably be, "Just in case." I'd roll my eyes, mumble under my breath about crazy women, and then decide it wasn't worth an argument and put the car in gear and go.

To be honest with you, most of the time we didn't need the umbrella, but when the rain came (which can happen without notice in Hawaii) I didn't complain when she handed me her umbrella with that smug little "I told you so" on her face. Never mind that 9 out of 10 times, I was right and it didn't rain. I was glad that she had it with her the one-time it did rain!

We talked about the umbrella principle in class. When a woman obeys and submits to her husband, she is under the "umbrella" protection of his authority before God. As long she stays submissive and obedient she is protected. When she steps out from under him she is no longer protected. God clearly teaches this principle throughout the Scriptures, especially in Ephesians 5:22-33 and I Peter 3:1-7.

Husbands, you can learn an important lesson from my experience. If my wife had not brought her umbrella with us I would not been able to offer her protection from the rain. That is why the Bible admonishes us to submit ourselves "one to another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:21) If I hadn't "submitted" to her desire to bring the umbrella we would have both gotten wet.

Rain will come into every life; "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45) When those rains come you will often find it is your wife that has going to provide you the means to weather the storm. Listen to her. Give her the freedom and even encouragement to use her God-given wisdom and intuition. She may not always be right, but how many weathermen are! I know my record is not perfect.

Meditation: Think about what it means to obey and submit for the wife and to lead as a husband. How can you improve in this area?

Assignment: Think back to a time in your marriage when your wife was right and how she helped you to be ready to face a situation because she was prepared for it. Take a moment to thank her and talk about how you can submit one to another.

Just for Fun: Go for a walk in the rain, with or without an umbrella depending on your mood. No rain in the forecast? Have a water fight or let your kids spray you.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Pastor Wayne

Memory Verse: Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

This is normally a passage that we read at Christmastime, however I believe there is a lot we can learn about marriage from Joseph and Mary. Notice in verse 18 that Mary was espoused to Joseph. Most likely this was an arranged marriage. Their parents chose their spouse for them. I am glad that we do not live in those days anymore! My mom would have chosen the meanest, ugliest girl she could find just to get back at me for how bad I was as a teenager. Could you imagine living your life with someone you didn't choose?

It is interesting that nowhere in the Bible does it say that Joseph loved Mary, but it is clear from this passage that he knew how to love his wife better than most husbands today. It is hard to imagine what Joseph was feeling when he found out his fiancé was pregnant out of wedlock and it was not his child. Before he knew that this was of God he determined that he was not going to embarrass her publically for what he would have considered sin. He not only had the right to end the pregnancy, but he could have had her stoned according to the law.

I have seen far too many couples who make their fights public and seem determined to do everything that they can to embarrass their spouse publically, whether it is to family, friends, their work or to the world as a whole. Certainly Joseph showed his character of love by not chastising and humiliating his fiancée.

The second act of love is that "he thought on these things" (vs. 20). That means he at least listened to Mary when she told him she had never had sex with anyone and she was pregnant of God. It certainly must have seemed a very far-fetched story. He was probably mad just because she made up such a "crazy story" and wouldn't tell him the "truth". What a blessing to have a husband who will listen to his spouse and listen to God and will think and not just react.

Joseph obeyed God and married Mary (vs. 24). He didn't hesitate. He didn't delay. He did what needed to be done even though it was going to cost him. Everyone would soon know that Mary was pregnant, if they didn't already. They would either believe that Joseph had committed sin or that he was a fool for taking a woman carrying another man's child. Nobody was going to believe the story that they had "concocted" about Mary being pregnant of God.

Finally, notice in vs. 25 that he "knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn son". Mary was not a perpetual virgin. She had sex with her husband after Jesus was born and had other children. The point I want to make is how hard it must have been for Joseph not to have his wife even though they were married, yet he never touched her. Many men show a total lack of self-discipline and consideration of their wife's needs and feelings in this area. Joseph loved her and God enough to wait. What a great example for us.

Meditation: Think about how hard it must have been on both Joseph and Mary to do what they did; having Jesus, raising Him, and watching him suffer and die.

Assignment: Discuss how you can be more careful to keep your arguments and problems private.

Just for Fun: Imagine what it must have been like when Joseph finally got to make love with his wife the first time. Talk about the first time you made love on your honeymoon. What was good? What did not go so well? What made it special? How has it gotten better since then?

Scripture: Genesis 24:60-67

Pastor Wayne

Memory Verse: Song of Solomon 4:1 Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead. Or Song of Solomon 6:5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

I love the story of how God brought Isaac and Rebekah together. If you go back to the beginning of the chapter you will see the providence of God and how He guides in their lives each step of the way. You also have a personal story of how you and your spouse came together. It is good to go back and remember your story and to see the hand of God working to bring you together. Take some time to thank God and to praise Him for his direction in your lives.

In our passage today Isaac and Rebekah see each other for the first time. Even though it was an arranged marriage, it was clearly love at first sight. This is not surprising because the Bible describes Rebekah as “very fair to look upon” (Genesis 24:16) and Isaac must have been a striking figure of a man to cause Rebekah to react the way she did when she saw him even from a distance.

What stood out to me the most is when the Bible says that “Rebekah lifted up her eyes” when she saw Isaac. You just get the feeling that her eyes lighted up when she beheld him. When she got closer to him she covered herself with her veil out of modesty and respect. The first and only thing that Isaac saw of his future bride was her eyes. I wonder if they didn't sparkle a little. Was their amusement or awe or maybe even a little fear reflected back to him. I believe that he may have fallen in love with her just because of what he saw in her eyes. I know I love the ways that my wife's eyes look at me!

I love it when my wife looks into my eyes. Sometimes I feel like I could drown in the depths of her love shining from those deep brown pools of passion. When I am preaching, I will often look in her face to see the support and encouragement reflected back to me. I crave the way her eyes will light up when I walk into the room. Your eyes will often speak louder than your words.

Your words, body language, and most importantly your eyes should express your deep care and passionate love for your spouse in both public and private. How do your eyes speak what is in your heart?

- Do your eyes sparkle with love for him?
- Do you stare at her as you soak in her beauty and grace?
- Does your gaze linger on him even after he has turned away?
- Are your eyes glued on her with focused attention when she is speaking?
- Is there a hint in your glance of a special rendezvous to come later when you are alone?
- Do your eyes express amusement at some private secret that only the two of you share?
- Does your look express sympathy and support for him when he needs that extra strength?
- Does he see the passion and desire to have his body next to yours when you make love?
- Is there sometimes a little mischievous glint in your eyes as if you are planning something?
- Is their magic in your every expression?

Meditation: Think about how “the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous” (1 Peter 3:12). How does knowing that encourage, challenge & comfort you.”

Assignment: Write out a description of your spouses eyes, both physically and of their expressions of feeling and love.

Just for Fun: Play a game where you spouse tries to express a feeling or desire with her face covered except for the eyes.