

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:18-21

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

I don't think it is a coincidence that Ephesians 5:18 comes right before a major passage on marriage. If there is any place that we need the filling of God's Spirit it is in our marriage relationship. It is only through the power of God's Holy Spirit that we can submit to one another and love each other unconditionally. We need to be under the influence of God's spirit the same way a drunk is under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol reduces inhibitions and magnifies our emotions. The Holy Spirit wants to free us from our inhibitions and allow us to take control of our emotions rather than let them control us. The end results of drinking are spelled out in Proverbs 23:29-35:

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

The end result of being filled with the Spirit is clearly listed in Galatians 5:22-25:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Before you can truly apply the teachings on marriage in Ephesians 5:21-33 you must first be filled with the Spirit of God. To be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by Him. What are the steps that we need to take to be a Spirit filled husband or wife? We will cover some of them in the next few lessons.

**Meditation:** Think about what it means to be filled with the Spirit. How can you be filled today?

**Assignment:** What is inhibiting you in your relationship with your spouse? What emotions do you need to let God help you bring into His control? What is one area that you are going to ask God to help you to change?

**Just for Fun:** Many unsaved couples have a glass of wine to relax together with at the end of the day. Choose a nonalcoholic beverage (or a sweet treat) that you will make your tradition to enjoy together at the end of a hard day.

**Scripture:** I Corinthians 6:19-20

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verse:** Acts 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

How can you be a man or a woman full of the Holy Ghost? If you want a Spirit-filled marriage, you need to have a Spirit-filled life. If you want a Spirit-filled life you need to meet the conditions that the Bible lays out for you. The most important condition is to have the Holy Spirit. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans 8:9)

First is prayer. The Bible doesn't tell us to pray for the filling of the Spirit, but every time people were filled with the Spirit there was prayer. Learn how to pray individually and as a couple. The more you call upon the Lord, the more you will see God's Spirit moving in your life.

Open up more of your life to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is like a gas. A gas will expand to fill the space it is given. You don't get more of the Holy Spirit, but He should get more of you. Open up every area of your life and invite Him to come in and take control.

I Thessalonians 5:19 says to "Quench not the Spirit." To quench something means to put it out. You quench a fire or quench your thirst. We quench the Spirit when we don't listen to Him when He convicts us of sin or moves us to do something.

Ephesians 4:30 tells us "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God". To grieve means to make sad or upset. What grieves the Spirit? Sin. Failure to obey. Not doing the things we should. If we want to be filled we have to do right. Confess the sin in your life and do right.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25) Walking in the Spirit simply means "being in agreement, going the same direction". Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3) God doesn't change the direction that He is going. We need to make sure our life is going in the direction He wants us to go.

The Spirit-filled Christian is always learning. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (I Corinthians 2:10) "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Holy Spirit can only help you to remember what you have learned!

It is helpful to note that the same conditions for being filled with the Spirit also apply to my relationship with my spouse. Determine today to be that Spirit-filled spouse! Being Spirit-filled is not a one-time experience. It is consistently changing moment to moment. I have to check myself daily, hourly, even every moment to see where I am in my relationship with the Lord.

**Meditation:** Meditate on these conditions. Work at being a Spirit-filled Christian.

**Assignment:** Are there areas that you need to open up in your life for the Spirit to control? Are you quenching the Spirit? Is there something you are doing or not doing that grieves Him? Are you walking with Him daily? List something that you have learned this week that makes you a better Christian.

**Just for Fun:** Get a helium-filled balloon for your spouse with a special message on it. Make them wear it on their wrist for a day so everyone will know you love them. Play a game of "balloon volleyball" with it. Suck up the helium and talk funny to each other. Tie a message to it with your email. Let it go and see if someone finds it.

**Scripture:** Proverbs 5:15-21

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verse:** Song of Solomon 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love *is* better than wine.

I promised you I would tell you what is better than wine. Making love! Proverbs 5:19 says that husbands are to be “ravished (intoxicated) always with her love.” Both Solomon and his bride agree that “love is better than wine” (Song of Solomon 1:2 & 4:10). The greatest natural high is to get lost in each other’s bodies and to lose yourself in the climax of your passion together!

Have you ever noticed how your mood changes after sex? Whether guy or gal, there is a markedly altered chemical shift that occurs *post-O* regardless of how you felt before; and its effects can be pretty significant. You and your partner may even feel like you’re high on something other than each other — and you are; it’s called Dopamine.

You’re feeling good because the act itself feels good (and you’re the world’s best lover), but you also feel great because sex releases a cocktail of chemicals, endorphins and hormones that can dramatically boost mood. Oxytocin is released when we touch other people. Its effects create bonds, whether between mother and baby, lovers or friends (thus the bro hug), and regular release of oxytocin can make you feel happier. Like [eating chocolate](#) or winning an all-expense-paid trip to Disney World, sex can cause an instantaneous mood lift, and it can also sustain a longer, healthier life. A study published in the Archives of Sexual Behavior showed that women in long-term sexual relationships (married sex) were less likely to suffer from depression than sexually inactive women. Couples who regularly have mutually satisfying intercourse tend to be prone to a healthier lifestyle and are generally happier people than those who have less frequent sexual activity.

Part of enjoying sex to the fullest is letting go of your inhibitions. Hebrews 13:4 is clear that “marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.” God designed sex to be enjoyable and He commands us to enjoy each others bodies as well as bring pleasure to your spouse. You can’t do that when you hold back. Look at the descriptive terms God uses in Proverbs chapter five:

- A fountain is always fresh & flowing. Vs. 18
- To rejoice means to be overjoyed & excited.
- An animal in heat has to have sex. Vs. 19
- Satisfy = To have one’s fill, to indulge
- Ravished = to be intoxicated.

Need help getting in the mood for love? Skip the alcohol and read Song of Solomon instead. Enjoy a longer lasting high without the negative after-effects.

**Meditation:** Think about why God designed sex to be so enjoyable and how your sex life can please God.

**Assignment:** Read the Song of Solomon together and discuss the analogies and word-pictures. Be frank in your discussion together. Use it as an opportunity to talk about what you like and don’t like and what is ok with God in your own relationship.

**Just for Fun:** Isn’t it obvious?!?

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:18-25

Pastor Wayne

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

*Adam was walking around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely, so God asked Adam, "What is wrong with you?" Adam said, "Lord, I don't have anyone to talk to."*

*God said, "Then I will give you a companion, and she will be called a 'woman'. This person will cook for you and wash your clothes, she will always agree with every decision you make. She will bear your children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will not nag you, and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will never have a headache, and will freely give 'love' and compassion whenever needed. She will never question your behaviour or the company you keep. She will support you and understand that you have important decisions to make throughout your life and don't have time for nonsense..."*

*Adam asked God, "What will this woman cost?"*

*God said, "An arm and a leg..."*

*Adam said, "What can I get for just a rib?"*

God wants us to give more than an arm or a leg for our wife. He wants us to give ourselves! As a rule men try to get by with the least effort that they can to get something done. That attitude not only shortchanges our wife, but we end up getting less in the bargain. If I want my wife to give herself fully to me, then I need to first give all of myself to her.

Matthew Henry said "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." What if God had made the woman from Adam's ear so he would listen to her or from his mouth so that he would talk to her and share what is on his mind and heart? God could have made her from his hand so he would touch her more or his arm so he could hold her close to him. She could have come from his leg so they could learn to walk together in life or from his brain so that he would always be thinking of her and her needs.

It doesn't matter which part of the body God created the woman from because God has commanded us to give our whole body, mind, and heart to each other. Give of yourself to your spouse today!

**Meditation:** Think about the wonder of God's creation and how he formed the woman to specifically meet the man's needs and vice versa.

**Assignment:** Talk about the unique differences between men and women both physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually between men and women. Marvel at God's wondrous work and talk about why He would make us so different.

**Just for Fun:** Go out for a dinner date for some barbeque ribs (or have a barbeque of your own at home). Later on, lay in bed together and count each other's ribs. See if your spouse can count yours without causing you to laugh because it tickles.

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:18-25

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verse:** Song of Solomon 7:2 Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, *which* wanteth not liquor: thy belly *is like* an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

Do you have an innie or an outie? 90% of us have an innie! So if you have an outie, you are unique and special in this world. Maybe you don't even know for sure what yours is. Stop and take a look. You might even consider practicing Omphaloskepsis - contemplation of one's navel as an aid to meditation. One thing you can contemplate on is: Did Adam and Eve have belly buttons? A belly button is formed where the umbilical cord was cut. Adam and Eve didn't have an umbilical cord because they were not born, they were created. Did God create them with a belly button? My personal belief is yes, but it really doesn't matter theologically.

What I do want you to contemplate is that Adam and Eve were unique in their creation. As the first man and woman, were they "perfect" in every way? Did Eve have perfect "C" cup breasts with a flat tummy and hourglass figure? Was Adam 6 feet tall with broad shoulders and a "six-pack" stomach? Did they both have flawless skin, pearly white teeth and perfect hair? I don't not what their individual features looked like but I do know that God created them perfect for each other.

Men don't "contemplate" on their belly button very much they much prefer contemplating their wife's belly button as well as all of the other ways that God created her body so unique and special for them to enjoy. In Song of Solomon 7 he extols her beautiful feet, the joints of her thighs, her navel and belly, her twin breasts, her neck, eyes, nose, head and luxurious hair. In other passages she describes him as fair to look upon, strong and fruitful like an apple tree, with white ruddy skin, fine golden looks, bushy black hair, eyes like a dove, sweet cheeks, a belly like ivory, strong legs, and a sweet mouth (Song of Solomon 1:15, 2:3, 5:10-16). They both obviously spent a lot of time contemplating each other's body and they liked what they saw!

Have you contemplated how your spouse's body is perfect for you? Psalm 139:14 says that we are "fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well." God did a marvelous work when He created my wife. On the day she was conceived He already knew that she was going to marry me and made her a perfect fit for me. Proverbs 5:19 says that not only am I to "let her breasts satisfy" me but I am to be "ravished" by her! Instead of wishing that your wife or husband were something that they are not, learn to marvel at how God created them especially for you to enjoy.

**Meditation:** Think about how we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God and created specifically for one another. Thank God for the beauty and uniqueness of His creation.

**Assignment:** Read Song of Solomon 5:10-16 and 7:1-8. Talk about how they described one another's body. Try to interpret what the word pictures they used mean (some of them don't sound very complimentary to our modern ears) and then come up with your own way of describing your spouse's body. Be poetic and descriptive. What would you say are their strong points and why you like that particular part of them. Do not be negative – Solomon didn't say, "Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, but I wish they were bigger."

**Just for Fun:** Make the assignment a hands-on project!

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:18-25

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verse:** Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

I think one of the greatest blessings for Adam and Eve being the first man and the first woman is that they had nothing to compare each other or their relationship with. Deuteronomy 5:21 commands us “Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbour’s.” Many marriages suffer because of the “if only’s”:

- If only my wife looked as sexy as that movie star.
- If only my husband was as strong and muscular like an athlete.
- Why can’t he have a better paying job like our neighbor?
- Why can’t she keep house like my friend’s wife.
- I wish we could afford a nice car like they do.
- If only we could live in a big house like them.

And the list goes on and on. Sometimes it seems like everyone has it better than we do.

- They don’t fight like we do.
- He probably gets more sex than I do.
- He is always complimenting his wife.
- They never have to worry about money.

Paul said “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” (II Corinthians 10:12) Although the verse is not dealing with marriage, the principle does apply. As long as you keep comparing yourself and everything you have with others (especially the false reality you see on TV) you will not be satisfied. If truth were to be told, every one of those people you envy have problems and often their lives are not as perfect as they seem.

Comparisons will always leave you dissatisfied. Proverbs 5:18-19 admonishes men to be satisfied with the breasts of the “wife of thy youth”. A man that is constantly looking at other women’s breasts, either through pornography or just “looketh on a woman to lust after her” will not be satisfied with his wife’s breasts even if there are perfect. A woman who fills her heart with romance stories and daydreams about being married to someone else will never be satisfied. Don’t fall into the comparison trap. Thank God for the person you are married to. Focus on all of the good qualities and work together at improving those things that you can change.

**Meditation:** Meditate on how God accepts us as we are, loves us unconditionally, and helps us to be better. Make it your goal to do the same for your spouse.

**Assignment:** What are five things that more than satisfy you about your spouse? What are the things about them that are still fresh and new to you every day and bring wonder to your heart and mind? Tell them how much they mean to you and thank them for being that person.

**Just for Fun:** Imagine how much fun it was for Adam and Eve to discover all the new things about each other. Rediscover each other. Look at each other with fresh eyes of wonder and discovery. Explore each other and your relationship anew.

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:14-25

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verse:** Proverbs 16:23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

Did you notice that our Scripture passage was expanded to include verses 14-17? I hope you take the time to read the Scripture and to pay attention to what you read each day. It is interesting that God told Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil before He made Eve. Did God tell Eve the same thing or did He expect Adam to tell Eve? Someone communicated this restriction to her because she told the serpent in Chapter 3 that they weren't allowed to eat of it. I wonder, if it was Adam's responsibility to tell her, how well did he communicate to her what God said.

I know that my communication skills are not the best. In fact, my wife would say that is an understatement. She would probably tell you they are non-existent. One of the biggest problems in our marriage and the cause of the majority of our conflicts is poor communication. Although, I will admit that I am the worst of the two of us, she also does not always communicate well either.

Did Adam tell her exactly what God said? In her rendition of it in chapter 3 she added to God's command. Was she confused by her husband's explanation or did she embellish it on her own? Did he stress how important this command was? Had he conveyed the emotion of it to her? We, as men, tend to state facts and leave out the feeling of what happened or what was said. Did he discuss with her how important it was to obey God? Had he shared how important this was to him and to their happiness together as a couple?

What about Eve? She wasn't faultless. Did she listen to her husband, giving him her full attention? Had she tried to understand how important it was to him to obey God? Perhaps she wasn't honest with him about any misgivings she had with this command or didn't share with him how difficult obeying God in this area was. She should have gone to Adam as soon as the serpent started talking to her and asked for his help and advice.

Satan not only got Adam and Eve to disobey God by eating of the fruit but he also caused marital conflict through poor communication. Ephesians 4:25-32 provides some great teaching on the importance of good communication, especially in marriage. Have you talked with your spouse about what is important to you? Have you discussed the boundaries that each of you needs to maintain and where the lines are drawn? Have you communicated the emotion of the situation and asked the questions that will make sure you understand? A lack of communication will always cause problems in your marriage.

**Meditation:** Think about how God communicates with us through His Word. Are you careful to communicate your needs, concerns, thoughts, and feelings with your spouse?

**Assignment:** Talk about how and when you communicate with each other. Do you have a specific time each day when you can discuss what you are concerned about and ask your spouse about their day and their needs? Discuss how you communicate with each other and how you can improve.

**Just for Fun:** Play a game like Charades or Pictionary. Vary the game where you can only make tones. You have to draw a word picture, or you can only use facial expressions to get them to guess the word or phrase. Learn how to communicate with your words, tone, and body language.

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:1-7

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.

I know that the Bible rarely gives us all of the details in the stories that we read. Sometimes time is compressed or we don't get all of the information about what was said or how things happened. This is the case in the story of Adam and Eve's sin. First, we don't know how long it was between chapter 2:25 and chapter 3:1. It could have been days, weeks, months, even years. Satan may have tempted Eve almost immediately after she was formed by God or this may have happened 50 years later. Was this a one-time incident or did the temptation go on for days or longer? Where was Adam at when she was being tempted? Did he know what the serpent was doing? Was he right there when Eve gave in? Did Eve talk with Adam about her doubts? Did he speak up or ignore the problem?

We do know that Adam ate the fruit when Eve gave it to him. Did he know it was the forbidden fruit? Did she mix it in with his salad where he couldn't see it? Did he take it because he wanted it or did he eat because he didn't want to be left out or perhaps he felt that he should share in her punishment?

Our imaginations can fill in the gaps but in the end we don't know for sure what either of them were thinking. What we do know is that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (I Timothy 2:14). Adam knew what he was doing was wrong and chose to sin anyway. It doesn't mean that Eve was not guilty of sin. Eve was deceived into believing a lie and she chose to disobey God because of it. She listened to Satan instead of listening to God. Sometimes we deliberately choose to sin and other times we fall into sin because we are not where we should be, doing what we should do, or we are listening to the wrong people.

What I wonder about is the dynamics between Adam and Eve. Ultimately the responsibility for the sin rests upon Adam's shoulders as the head of his home. God didn't call for Eve when they were hiding; He called for Adam to answer. That doesn't absolve Eve of responsibility for her sin. God punished her for what she did.

Was Adam being the leader he should be? As we talked about yesterday; did he communicate clearly with Eve what was expected? Did he step in when Eve was being tempted to protect her? Did he warn her about listening to the serpent? Why did he eat the fruit instead of taking her to God immediately to work out the problem?

These same questions apply to me as the Spiritual leader of my home. Have I communicated clearly to my family what God expects us to do? Am I aware of the other voices they are hearing: Internet, TV, friends, etc. and warning them not to listen? Do I wait too long to step in and protect my wife and family from the attacks of Satan? When there is a problem do I just try to cover it up rather than go to God together?

We may not know the full story of what happened in the Garden of Eden until we get to Heaven, but we can learn some lessons from what we do know.

**Meditation:** Meditate on how and why we sin by choice and how we sin through deception.

**Assignment:** Talk about your family rules. What are the things that you don't do and your family doesn't do? Have you clearly communicated them with each other and your children? Why do you have these rules? How are you going to abide by them? Write them down and maybe even post them for all to see.

**Just for Fun:** Make a list of things that God has not forbidden you to do as a married couple and do them!



**Scripture:** Proverbs 31: 28-30

Jensine Surface

**Memory Verse:** Proverbs 31: 28 *“Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”*

As he tossed his unfortunate toy across the room, my 2 year old son Joshua threw himself to the ground howling and wailing. Apparently, things had not been going his way, and as a good mother I had to solve the problem. Peeling the distressed little boy from the laminate flooring I asked him what the matter was. He mumbled something only another 2 year old could interpret. Baffled, I asked him a different question hoping I would receive an answer in English: “Joshua, why are you so mad?” With tears and snot smeared all over his scowling face he replied most ungraciously, “I not mad; I happy!”

I am no Sherlock, but with all evidence I determined very quickly that he was, in fact, not happy. Truthfully, I can say as an adult that I have had plenty of those moments. Perhaps not kicking and screaming, but putting on that plastered smile hoping the people around me would not notice my unhappiness. To our dismay, keeping up a happy face can only go so far. It will never solve the issue and does not make one’s life any better. Worst of all, no matter how hard a person can proclaim and pretend their happiness; evidence and witnesses will always speak against them. Harsh isn’t it? It is the Scriptural Truth.

Consider the woman of Proverbs 31. Her children and husband called her happy (aka. blessed). I can just imagine her children conversing with the other children in the neighborhood talking about how their mom is wonderful and happy. And her husband embracing her in a hug thanking her for all the hard work she put into making their home into a euphoric haven and calling her blessed. But just like every other living woman, she was human. Of course, life was not all perfect for her as we often think. Amongst her busy life, she may have left the bread in the oven too long or even over salted dinner. Perhaps, the scarlet clothes she made could have had the wrong measurements. She may have accidentally double-booked her Monday! All we know is that she was a hard worker, always did her best, and was happy.

What made this woman happy? It was not her hard work, talent, great looks, or “perfect” family that made her happy. What made her happy was the relationship she had with her Lord. It was how she lived for God that gave her such a title. She performed her duties and fulfilled her role with the driving passion to please God alone. When life did not go as planned, she remembered her Lord. Happiness naturally became the result for her life.

**Meditation:** When you are unhappy because things are not going the way you want, remember your Lord. Everything that you try to accomplish in your daily life, do it for Him alone. Don’t forget to work hard and do your best along the way! Naturally, your works will praise you, and happiness will be your end result. They’ll call you happy!

**Assignment:** Make a list of the most important roles you fulfill everyday. Alongside the roles listed, write down how you are going to happily accomplish something today for each role.  
For example:

Christian -share the gospel with someone today/ Spend time with God  
Wife -Polish husband shoes, sew that button, write him a love note  
Mother -Play with children and share a kind word to each child  
Housekeeper -Keep house tidy, wash one load, and plan dinner

**Just for Fun:** Change your name to Happy for one day. Ask your husband, children, and even friends to refer to you as Happy. And if you’re bold, answer the phone with, “Hey, this is Happy!”

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:17-22

Pastor Wayne

**Memory Verse:** James 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

If Job was the most patient man in the Bible, then Noah's wife had to be the most patient woman in the Scriptures! We don't know anything about her, not even her name, but Mrs. Noah must have been an amazing wife and mother. First, she helped raise three boys to become godly men in a time when "the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5) Sounds like a description of today's world, doesn't it?

These boys weren't perfect, but neither was their father as we can see in Genesis 9 when Noah got drunk and Ham, their youngest son, handled the situation very poorly. It is amazing how a lifetime of good can be destroyed in a moment of weakness. It is also amazing to me that these three boys stayed with their father, helping him with his "crazy project" even after they had grown up and could have left to go out on their own. That is evidence of good training by both mom and dad.

Raising three boys took a lot of patience, but that is not why I think that Mrs. Noah deserves the Longsuffering Award. Can you imagine what it must have been like to live with all of those animals for so long, both as Noah collected them and later in the ark? If you are a mother with pets in your house, you know who ends up taking care of them! You have all heard those infamous words; "If you will let me get a dog (or cat or rabbit or fish) I will take care of it. I'll feed it and walk it and clean up all of the messes. You won't have to anything." Lies, all lies!

I am sure that much of the responsibility of taking care of the animals fell on to Mrs. Noah. After all, Noah and his three sons' were busy building the ark. She probably fed them every day. Cleaned up their messes. Made sure that they had fresh clean stalls. Almost sounds like taking care of your family! It takes a lot of patience to be a wife and a mother. I hope that Noah and the boys helped out, but they had their own work cut out for them just building the ark.

Mrs. Noah had to learn how to take care of all of those different animals. The lion's needs were very different from those of the chickens or the giraffe. You may not live with a menagerie like she did, but it still takes patience to live with the animal personalities in your own home. They leave messes, fight among themselves, and don't always obey or listen. Whether you are a husband or a wife or a mother or father you live with animal personalities every day. Practice patience as you learn to live with your lion, otter, beaver, or retriever. The first characteristic of love in I Corinthians 13:4 is longsuffering (patience).

**Meditation:** Meditate on how God is longsuffering or patient with us. How can you be more patient with your family?

**Assignment:** Write down which animals your spouse and children are. List five ways that you have to be patient with them. Make a list of specific things that you can do in order to be a blessing to them.

**Just for Fun:** If your spouse were a real animal, what would they be? Why? How would you stroke them to make them content? What kind of food would you feed them?