

# MARRIAGE

*The apostle Paul sets forth a concise discussion concerning the marriage relationship in his letter to the Ephesians. The Holy Spirit establishes the husband as the spiritual leader of the home, yet he is not to be domineering. The wife is to be respectful and submissive, but is not to be considered a door-mat. Unconditional love is foundational to the relationship, and given human nature, only possible when the marriage is dedicated to seeking the love of Jesus Christ.*

You wives must submit to your husbands' leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord. For a husband is in charge of his wife in the same way Christ is in charge of his body the Church. (He gave his very life to take care of it and be its Savior!) So you wives must willingly obey your husbands in everything, just as the Church obeys Christ. And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the Church when he died for her, to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's Word; so that he could give her to himself as a glorious Church without a single spot or wrinkle or any other blemish, being holy and without a single fault. That is how husbands should treat their wives, loving them as parts of themselves. For since a man and his wife are now one, a man is really doing himself a favor and loving himself when he loves his wife! No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body the Church, of which we are parts. (That the husband and wife are one body is proved by the Scripture, which says, "A man must leave his father and mother when he marries so that he can be perfectly joined to his wife, and the two shall be one.") I know this is hard to understand, but it is an illustration of the way we are parts of the body of Christ. So again I say, a man must love his wife as a part of himself; and the wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband--obeying, praising, and honoring him. *Ephesians 5:22-33 TLB*

## ***Characteristics of LOVE...***

**SACRIFICIAL:** And here is how to measure it--the greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friends; *John 15:13 TLB*

**STRONG AND ENDURING:** If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.  
*1 Corinthians 13:7 TLB*

**FORGIVING:** Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love makes up for many of your faults. *1 Peter 4:8 TLB*

**BEYOND HUMAN UNDERSTANDING:** and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high his love really is; and to experience this love for yourselves, though it is so great that you will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it. And so at last you will be filled up with God himself.  
*Ephesians 3:18-19 TLB*

### ***Characteristics of RESPECT...***

**DEMONSTRATES HONOR AND UNSELFISHNESS:** As a result we were showered with gifts, and when the time came to sail, people put on board all sorts of things we would need for the trip. *Acts 28:10 TLB*

**SHOWS REVERENCE FOR THE LORD:** Oh, that they would always have such a heart for me, wanting to obey my commandments. Then all would go well with them in the future, and with their children throughout all generations! *Deuteronomy 5:29 TLB*

**LEADS TO A RIGHTEOUS LIFESTYLE:** Obey God because you are his children; don't slip back into your old ways--doing evil because you knew no better. But be holy now in everything you do, just as the Lord is holy, who invited you to be his child. *1 Peter 1:14-15 TLB*

**STRENGTHENS OUR INTIMACY WITH JESUS CHRIST:** Jesus replied, "Because I will only reveal myself to those who love me and obey me. The Father will love them too, and we will come to them and live with them."  
*John 14:23 TLB*