

The Wise Husband

Selected Proverbs

CBC Sun. a.m.: 6/21/09 Father's Day

ENGAGE: Four Year-Old Suzie had just been told the story of “Snow White” for the first time in her life. She could hardly wait to get home from nursery school to tell her mommy. With wide-eyed excitement, she retold the fairy tale to her mother that afternoon. After relating how Prince Charming had arrived on his beautiful white horse and kissed Snow White back to life, Suzie asked **loudly**: “**And do you KNOW what happened then?**” “Yes,” said her mom, “they lived **happily ever after**.” “**No**,” responded Suzie, **with a frown**, “... **they got married**.” [Cecil Osborne, *The Art of Understanding Your Mate*, quoted by Swindoll in *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories*, 362.]

Good marriages do not just happen. As husbands and wives, we must work at our marriage both to give it life and to keep it vigorous. **Divorce** is not the only action that will **kill** a marriage. **Drifting apart and separating** will kill a marriage. **Neglect** will kill a marriage. In my premarital counseling I often will tell the couple the **story of a childless couple whose marriage had been in a state of living death for many years**. Nevertheless, for reasons convincing to themselves, they wished to avoid a legal separation. Instead, for years they went their separate ways, maintaining separate bedrooms, eating breakfast and lunch separately and engaging in separate activities during the day. If they met at the dinner table or for social engagements, it was generally in the presence of friends. They avoided being alone with each other.

One day, the husband who was a prominent citizen, learned from some friends that his wife had written a book that was becoming a literary success. He read it and discovered it was autobiographical. **Its contents contained a suspicion of scandal. It told of the author's heartbreak in the loss of a man whom she had lived with for many years and now was gone forever**. The date of her deep interest in this man with whom she had lived as revealed in the book was after they had been married.

The husband angrily confronted his wife and charged her with adultery. He demanded to know the name of her secret lover. For a long time she refused to tell him. At length, she cried: “**YOU WERE THAT MAN. You were once the wonderful, idealistic young man whom I loved and adored**. But that man died long ago. Now all I have left is the man he became—one whom I know to be selfish, mean, and a cheat; one whom I can no longer love or respect. [Source unknown]

FOCUS: Husbands, how can you and I avoid being a man despised by our wife? How can you and I be a husband that causes our wife to rejoice?

SET THE STAGE biblically: We continue our series on the most practical book in the Bible, the book of Proverbs. The last two weeks we've considered the wise parent. Previously on Mother's Day we considered God's Ideal Wife from Prov 31.

PREVIEW: Today we'll going to look at what God says about **the wise husband**. Specifically, we're going to look at **three characteristics of the wise husband**. Then next week we'll look at an area that applies to both husbands and wives, **marital fidelity**.

ANNOUNCE the passage: Again and again God encourages us to pay attention and heed His wisdom. For the Scripture reading this morning we are going to consider a passage where Christ, personified as wisdom, exhorts us to listen to Him and His wisdom. God wants each of us to understand: Each one of us is the ultimate loser or gainer in our decision to choose wisdom or folly. For the Scripture reading this morning let's listen to what the Spirit of God says to us in Prov 9:1-12. Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 9:1-12 [p. 566].

Trans: What are the characteristics of a wise husband? What actions can you take as a husband to be wise and build a foundation for a strong marriage? The first characteristic I want you to see about the wise husband is this:

The wise husband understands his wife is a GIFT from God.

The wise husband views his wife as a gift from God. Husbands understand your wife is a gift from God. Solomon observes that finding a spouse is **a pleasurable gift from God**. Note Solomon's evaluation for the husband who finds a wife in **Prov 18:22 (NKJV)**: “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the Lord*”

(Prov 18:22 NKJV). “The one who finds a wife finds what is enjoyable, and receives a pleasurable gift from the Lord” (Prov 18:22 NET). **Husband, Your wife is a good gift from God.** [And all the wives said... Amen! ☺]

After God created all of creation on the sixth day He created Adam, the first man. Six times God looks at what He made and says “**It is good.**” The only thing in creation God said was **not good** was that **the man was ALONE**. God affirms it was not good for man to be alone. SLIDE: “The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him” (Gen 2:18 NET). [Blank Slide]

God said it was not good for Adam to be alone because Adam could not do all God planned for humankind. As Adam began to function as God’s representative, naming the animals God brought to him, Adam became very aware of his solitude [cf. A. Ross, *Genesis*, 126]. God provided **an indispensable companion** for Adam. The woman supplies what Adam was lacking in the design of creation. Logically it follows then that Adam supplies what Eve, the woman was lacking. **God created Eve as an indispensable companion for Adam.** Husbands, your wife supplies what you lack.

APPL: Wives, you supply what your husband lacks and it logically follows that your husband supplies what you lack. **Husbands, value your wife. Understand your wife is a gift from God.**

Generally speaking Solomon says: The one who finds a wife finds what is **abundantly enjoyable**. Your wife is a wonderful gift from God. She supplies you **what is beneficial for life**. Finding a spouse, you receive a pleasurable gift from God!

APPL: Men, if you will listen to your wife and allow God to use her to sharpen you, you will become increasingly effective in your work and ministry for the Lord. God has given you your wife as a helper for you. Your long-term effectiveness in life depends to a great degree on your marriage relationship.

If you are in a leadership role note as well that often those who work with you will have the same attitude toward you as your mate does. Your communication patterns, attitudes of selfishness, control, and use of time are **frequently the same** in work as at home. **Men, by learning to listen to your mates and learning to change you will become increasingly effective in what God calls you to do. Allow your wife to sharpen you!** [Cf. Bill Lawrence, DM 101 Forming Leaders file.] After all, your wife is God’s gift to you.

Now just because you value your wife’s input does not mean you give up the responsibility God gives you as head of your home. **Keep a biblical balance, listen and learn from your wife, but don’t hand over the leadership of the home to your wife.** This is not what God wants.

ILL: This reminds me of **a chief in Africa** who called all his men to come to his hut in the center of the village. It was his fear, he said to his men, that there were no longer any real men in the village. The chief had the impression the men were being ruled too much by their wives.

To find out if this were true, the chief asked all the men who felt their wives bossed them around to leave the hut through the door on the right. Those who felt they were in charge at home should leave through **the door on the left**. Lo and behold, **ALL** of the chief’s men left through the door on the right—all, **EXCEPT ONE who stood all alone.**

This lone man finally went out through the door on the left. So the chief called the men together again and gave a speech of **praise** to the lone wolf. “**At least we have one real man in our village,**” the chief said. “**Could you please share with us your secret?**” The man looked rather sheepish. At last **he muttered,** “**Chief, when I left home this morning, my wife TOLD me, ‘HUSBAND, NEVER FOLLOW THE CROWD!’**” [cf. Walter Trobisch, *The Misunderstood Man*, quoted in *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcard*, C. Swindoll, 364.]

Men, a good wife is a pleasurable gift from God. Cherish your wife. Listen and learn from your wife. Allow God to use her to sharpen you, but **be the leader in the home**. God gives you the greater responsibility to lovingly lead your family.

Trans: Now if God has blessed you with a capable wife of noble character you are an honored and blessed man. Solomon reminds us: [SLIDE] “A noble wife is the crown of her husband, but the wife who acts shamefully is like rotteness in his bones” (Prov 12:4 NET). [Blank Slide]

If your marriage has worked out well give credit to God. Men, if God has given you are a wife who skillfully combines her knowledge with discretion, thank the Lord. Note the insight Solomon gives us in **Prov 19:14:** “*Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord*” (Prov 19:14 NKJV). “A

house and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Prov 19:14 NET). **A prudent wife** [Heb. fem. of *maskil*, “intelligent, wise”] **is a wife who brings honor to her husband rather than shame** [cf. 10:4 where same words used to contrast foolish son who brings shame (cf. Whybray, *Proverbs*, 280)].

Reit/Trans: How can you be a wise husband? Understand your wife is a gift from God.

ILL: Now for you that are not married who wish to be so, I’m reminded of a story that Chuck Swindoll tells. He states: “Several years ago when I was speaking at Moody Bible Institute, a lady wrote me a note saying, ‘I didn’t worry about getting married. I did leave my future to God’s will. But every night I hung a pair of men’s pants on the bed and knelt down and prayed this prayer, ‘**Father in heaven, hear my prayer. And grant it if you can. I’ve hung a pair of trousers here. Please fill them with a man.**’ Isn’t that a great letter?”

“Well,” Chuck continues, “I read that letter the next week when I got back to the church I pastored in Fullerton, California. It didn’t fit my sermon; I just rammed it in because I thought it was such a great letter. **The father and the older son** of a family I knew were in the church, but the mother was home with a sick daughter. When I read the woman’s note I watched them. The father just cracked up laughing but the boy was rather serious. Interestingly, **several weeks later I got a letter from the mother who hadn’t been in that service**. She wrote, “**Dear Chuck, I’m wondering if I have something to worry about. I’ve noticed that our son, when he goes to bed at night, has this BIKINI hanging over the foot of his bed.**”

Men, if God has blessed with you a wife understand she is a gift from God. And **for all that are single** I like what one man wrote: “Success is not so much marrying one who makes you happy as escaping the many who could make you miserable.” [Clyde Narramore, quoted in Swindoll, *Tardy Oxcart*, 365.

Transition: How can you be a wise husband? Understand your wife is a GIFT from God. A second way you can be a wise husband is this: Praise your wife.

The wise husband PRAISES his wife (Prov 31:28; 27:15).

Speak about your wife with great enthusiasm and admiration. Focus on your wife’s many positive qualities. Appreciate and praise your wife for her many excellent qualities. Speak in glowing terms of your noble wife. **Note Prov 31:28-29 (NKJV):** “Her children rise up and call her blessed; **Her husband also, and he praises her: 29** “Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all” (Prov 31:28-29 NKJV).

APPL: Husbands, speak highly of your wife. Take the time to praise your wife. In response to the virtuous wife we are told her children along with her husband take the time to praise and honor her. The deliberate action of “rising up” to call her blessed is the Hebrew way of indicating something important is about to be done that has to be prepared for. **Make that extra effort to show your wife how special she is!**

Don’t tear down your spouse with your words. Build one another up.

APPL/ILL: While words alone without action are empty, this does not mean words are unimportant! Let your wife know you appreciate her. Tell her! Don’t be like the Norwegian farmer, whose wife complained to him about **the lack of romance** in their marriage. She said, “You never tell me that you love me.” The farmer replied, “**I said I loved you when I married you. If I change my mind I’ll let you know.**”

A wise husband praises his wife. We don’t always understand what a person is thinking and feeling by their actions. We need them to talk to us. Husband, your wife needs you to praise her. **If you will treasure your wife as a priceless gift from God, if you consistently praise your wife, you marriage can be more joyful for both of you.**

If you have a wife of noble character, thank the Lord. Praise her! Men, praise and affection are two of your wives basic needs.

Appl to wives: For you that are wives, **seek to be a woman of noble character**. A wife who **constantly nags** her husband is **irritating**. Solomon observes the frustration she causes her husband in **Prov 27:15-16 (NKJV):** “A continual dripping on a very rainy day And a contentious woman are alike; **16** Whoever restrains her restrains the wind, And grasps oil with his right hand” (Prov 27:15-16 NKJV). A contentious wife is “like water dripping on a rainy day, she is annoying and never stops quarreling. She is as impossible to restrain as **the wind**. Trying to constrain her contentious spirit is as impossible as trying to pick up a handful of **oil**. She is both unsteady and slippery” [Sid S. Buzzell, “Proverbs” in BKC:OT on Prov 27:15-16.]

Reit/Trans: How can you be a wise husband? View your wife as a gift from God. Praise your wife. A third way you can be a wise husband is this: Love your wife.

The wise husband LOVES his wife (Prov 30:21-23).

Love and cherish your wife. The wise man, Agur, whose name means “gatherer” wisely observes that the whole order of our lives can be shaken up by certain changes that sometimes take place (cf. Prov 30:21). **Look at Prov 30:21 (NKJV): “For three things the earth is perturbed [or trembles, that is social order and harmony is threatened], Yes, for four it cannot bear up.”**

What is the significance when in proverbs it uses numbers such as here? “For three things.... Yes for four....” **Proverbs that count illustrate the process of the wise person going through life making lists of observations about wise and foolish events.** The first number “three” makes the basic emphasis. The additional number on the list “four” heightens the emphasis and suggests that more examples could be added. As in all proverbs, we are being probed to add our own observations to the list [cf. Hughes & Laney, *Tyndale Concise Comm.* on Prov 30:1-33].

One of the four social reversals Agur highlights for us is given in v. 23 (NKJV): The earth is perturbed [or shaken] by: **“A hateful woman when she is married”** (Prov 30:23a NKJV). This might be better translated: The earth is shaken under ... **“an unloved woman who is married”** (30:23 NET).

A social reversal that is a recipe for disaster and upheaval is a wife who experiences rejection from her husband. This rejection often takes place in conjunction with a husband choosing another woman over his wife. Note how the next phrase in Prov 30:23 implies this: the earth trembles... under **“a maidservant who succeeds her mistress”** (Prov 30:23b, NKJV).

An “unloved woman” [in v. 23 a] literally is a woman who is hated [Heb. “hated,” from סָנְאָ (*sane*’), a feminine passive participle]. It is used in the OT of a husband rejecting his wife. For example, of Jacob loving Rachel and “hating,” i.e., rejecting Leah. SLIDE: When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved [lit. hated], he enabled her to become pregnant while Rachel remained childless.^{29:32} So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, “The Lord has looked with pity on my oppressed condition. Surely my husband will love me now” (Gen 29:31-32 NET; cf. also Deut 21:15-17; Isa 60:15). [BLANK SLIDE]

APPL (Wives): For you woman here today, who know what it is to be rejected by your husbands, God says to you from Leah’s experience: “I know what you have gone through. I feel your hurt.” God wants you to know of His compassion for what you have gone through. God has kept all your tears in His bottle, as it were. Our Lord, who was rejected by His own, longs to comfort your heart through His Spirit. Keep your hope and trust in the Lord. He will see you through!

For all of us who are married, let’s keep the home-fire burning. Cultivate your relationship with your spouse. Don’t let your love smolder and die!

ILL: One unloved wife reflecting back on her and her husband’s lost love wrote:

“In those days the words, ‘I love you honey,’ were said with five different inflections and meant fifty different things. They could have meant thank you for opening the catsup bottle, even though you said that I had loosened it first. Or I enjoy our talks when you come home from work and there’s just the two of us to share and dream. Or simply that I appreciate all those things that make up you; your sensitive strength, the way you smile me off my soapbox, or the way you pretend you are listening when you read the paper.

“But somehow along the way we turned and instead of floating with the current, we now struggle against it. **It wasn’t one action, or one word, but a series of little unresolved spats and quarrels** that now make **the TV** the solution to the problems of a hard day **and silences us** when we should say ‘Thank you’ or ‘You really look nice today.’ Today I no longer tell you that I love you because the sound of those words mocks the special meaning they carried when we were first wed, and it is too painful to remember that those feelings we said we would never lose were, tear by tear, left in the past.” [–Deborah Jean Morris Swindoll, March 2, 1980 (Swindoll, *Tardy Oxcart*, 366-67.)]

APPL: Husbands, love the wife God gave you as a gift. Remember love is a decision! Choose to love your spouse unconditionally.

It doesn't take long for newlyweds to discover that there is no such thing as a perfect mate... **A marriage license is just a LEARNER'S PERMIT....** Your love must grow. I appreciated the premarital counsel Janel and I received: "The love you have now is not enough to see you through your marriage. Your love must grow if your marriage is to make it."

*****Choose to love. Choose to cherish your wife.** Husband's, from your wife's point of view, affection is the essential cement of her relationship with you. Without affection, your wife probably feels alienated from you. With affection your wife becomes tightly bonded to you.

If you say, "I'm not the affectionate type. You may need to explain to your wife, "Honey I love you very much, but I often fail to express my deep love and care for you appropriately. Would you help me learn to express this affection, which I feel toward you, in ways that you appreciate?" Willard Harley in his book *His Needs, Her Needs* writes to husbands: Women usually express a need for physical closeness, such as hugging, hand holding, and sitting close together. Kissing, is very important to most women, as are token gifts and cards that express your emotional attachment and commitment. Women love to have their husbands take them out to dinner and usually a wife regards any effort her husband makes to join her in shopping for food and clothing as a sign of affection." Some other suggestions Harley gives are: Hug and kiss your wife every morning while you are still in bed. Tell her you love her while you're having breakfast together. Kiss her before you leave for work. Gifts for special days should be sentimental, not practical. Help with the dishes after dinner. Hug and kiss your wife every night, before you go to sleep.... [pp. 41-42].

Husbands, let's learn the habits of affection. **Learn what makes your wife feel emotional closeness to you.** Then, by God's grace practice those actions that will help your wife feel emotional closeness to you. That's part of what it means to nourish and cherish your wife.

Reiteration/Transition: The wise husband understands his wife is a GIFT from God. The wise husband PRAISES his wife. The wise husband LOVES his wife. (Next week we will look at a fourth and final quality of the wise husband: the wise husband maintains sexual fidelity within marriage.)

Husbands, thank God for your wife. She is a gift from God. Praise her. She is a priceless treasure from God. Demonstrate to your wife God's unconditional love...

Now the model for us as husbands in loving our wives is Christ's love for the church. What was the extent of Christ's love? **He laid down His life for us.** Christ calls you and me to unconditionally love our wife. Would you ask God to help you love your wife unconditionally?

Now to love your wife unconditionally make sure you have understood and accepted God's unconditionally love shown to you by Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and rose again the third day...Do you recognize your need of a Savior... All have sinned (Rom 3:23)... wages of sin is death (6:23)

Salvation: Have you accepted God's unconditional love shown to you in Christ? Have you come to that point in your spiritual journey where you know you have eternal life?

How can we be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and your house. Men, by putting your faith in Christ alone for your forgiveness God gives you eternal life as a free gift.... (Eph 2:8-10).. **Salvation prayer:** "Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. Nothing that I am or do makes me deserving of heaven. I believe Jesus Christ died for me and rose from the grave. Right now I trust Jesus Christ alone as my Savior. I am not trusting in my good life, my best efforts, my baptism, or my church membership to take me to heaven. **I am trusting Christ alone to save me.** Thank you for the forgiveness and everlasting life I now have. Help me to live a life from this day forward that says "thank you" for what You have just given me. In Jesus' name. Amen."

As we conclude our service today **we want to help each of us recognize and honor the many kinds of fathers in our church today.** I appreciate **Pastor Rick** finding this video clip that reminds each of us that there are many kinds of fathers today, and all need to be honored. At the conclusion of this clip, **Dave Markle Sr.** will lead in a prayer of dedication for the many kinds of fathers in our congregation.

DVD: Father's Day: A Broader Perspective [ordered through: <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/9788/Fathers-Day-A-Broader-Perspective>]

Prayer for Fathers (Dave Markle, Sr).

Closing Challenge & Prayer (Pastor Mike)