

Trusting God in Marriage

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Now abides faith, hope, and love, these three:

*But the greatest of these is *love.*

The older women . . . teach the young women . . . to love their husbands . . .

that the Word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2: 3, 4, 5).

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 13

When it comes to the question of the love which is most divine, the Holy Spirit has chosen carefully the word *agape*.

***Agape** [ah-GAH-pay]: This is the attitude of God toward His Son, the human race generally, and believers in Jesus Christ specifically. This is what we call "the God kind of love" or truly unconditional love. It has its basis in the nature of the One who loves; is sacrificial in nature; is not based in the excellence or worth of its object. The term *agape* was coined by the New Testament writers to express the unique type of love God has, a love we can experience and share only through salvation in Jesus Christ as we abide in Him.

Love is . . . longsuffering; kind; not jealous; not arrogant; not rude; not selfish; not resentful; does not think evil; rejoices in truth; bears all things; believes all things; hopes all things; endures all things. Love never fails.

Prayer Request: "Married Couples in the Church." As Bible-believing Christians, we know that marriage is not a human arrangement or a social convention that can be changed or set aside as needed. Society never thought of marriage. God did.

Love originated with God. Before time began, we encounter the indescribable love within the counsels of the triune Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—three Persons, yet one God. [See **John 17: 25-26.**]

	All about Love	
Question	Answer	Reference
The source of love?	God	I John 4: 7-10 & 16
The model of love?	Christ	I John 3: 16

The manifestation of love by believers?	Love for others	I John 4: 21
The extent of Christ's love?	Sacrifice of life	I John 3: 16
The results of Christ's love?	Abiding presence of God	I John 4: 12 & 16

After the Wedding Day: Barry and I had just come off a big moment in our lives, our wedding, but would soon discover that we don't live in the big, grand moments but in the thousands of small ones, even moments when life is busy, boring, or hard. For all the moments in marriage, big and small, became the tapestry of marriage. For our marriage to work, life would no longer be living as if my life belongs to me and the same for Barry. Love would require sacrificing our independence for a greater calling of a lifelong relationship. In many ways, our choices, decisions, and actions affected the other.

"Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called 'children of God'—and that is not just what we are called, but what we are" (I John 3: 1).

Forgiveness in Marriage: *"[To] bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances [we] may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgives you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Read Colossians 3:12-14; Meditate on Ephesians 4:32.).*

*"For God does not make us all at once. The process is a long one, running through all the years of life, how many so ever those years may be. There is never an hour when some new touch is not given to our life, some new line marked in our character . . . Always God is on the field and He works in and through all experiences . . . there is nothing accidental in any of the providences that come into our life" ~J.R. Miller, *The Upper Currents* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1902), 59.*

"And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in grace until His task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns" (Philippians 1:6).

The Perfect Marriage: And God said, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh."* What beautiful language to picture marriage! Marriage takes "leaving" and "cleaving." (**Genesis 2:24**).

The New Reality: Because Adam and Eve had disobeyed God, they hid themselves in shame, fear, and guilt. When God asked Adam if he had eaten from the forbidden tree, he made excuses and blamed God and his wife: "The woman that you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate." And when God questioned Eve, she said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (**Genesis 3: 11-13 & 15-19**).

God then portrays the effects of sin on their marriage and daily life. Eve would have pain in childbirth, and her husband would be the leader in the marriage though she would desire to lead. Eve went from co-equal leadership to Adam's leadership. Adam would have pain in daily labor, and one day he would die and return to the soil from which he had come. Our loving God in His grace gave a Promise in **Genesis 3: 15** to restore the broken relationship between them and God: a Redeemer would come into the world by the "seed of a woman." And because of His death and resurrection, Christ would "crush" Satan's head and win a complete victory over him.

"To Love, Honor, and Cherish": **Cherish** means *to hold dear; to feel or show affection; to appreciate*. "Cherish" changes everything for your marriage. You can cherish your husband even when things are really hard. Isn't there something for which you can be thankful? Express gratitude to your husband. Appreciate him. Cherish him. Extend grace, even when your husband disappoints you. It's so easy to shut down. The remedy is spiritual and requires a spiritual solution. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart" (Proverbs 3:5). "They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40: 31).

*His divine power has given to us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue* (II Peter 1:3).

"I want to tell you it is worth every effort and every prayer on your part to love your husband. Every time you put that man down in your thinking and your words, every time you insult him, reject him, or force him into certain mold, you're plucking down your house. And every time you give in to discontent, self-pity, you're plucking down your house.

Love your husband. Cherish him. Uplift him. Protect him. Even if he's a boorish, insensitive man, you tell the Lord that. And remember: You're not perfect either." ~Donna Radtke, *The Powerful Influence of a Christian Woman*

One day, each of us will give an account of our ministry—and as wives, our first ministry is to our husbands. It is a solemn thought that we shall stand before the Judgment seat of Christ and give our “final report.” And I can imagine Jesus saying, “*What did you do with that husband I gave you? Did you honor and love Him as I love you?*” You have all the help you need to love your husband by the One who is writing your story. **Remember:** God is educating you daily in His *agape* love. “*Now abides faith, hope, and love, these three—but the greatest of these is love.*”

Study Questions

1. In **Genesis 2:24**, what three things does God say about the marriage relationship?
2. How does God define forgiveness? How quick are you to forgive your husband? Read **Matthew 18:21-35** and **Ephesians 4:30-5:2**. Write below **4:32**.
3. Read **John 15: 1-9**. How will abiding in Christ, abiding in His love, influence your marriage? Write below **John 15:7**.
4. What would your husband say if you asked him if he thinks you respect him? And how would love and respect affect your marriage? Read **Ephesians 5:22-33**. Write below **Ephesians 5:33**.
5. “*This moment is a preparation for our eternal life in Christ.*” God promises that those who serve Him in their daily lives will be rewarded by the Lord in eternity. As you read the following verses, consider your ministry as a wife. Write below **Colossians 3:23-24**.
6. Read **I Peter 3:1-6**. A wife who has a gentle and quiet spirit (“*a heart at rest*”) is very precious in the sight of God. These qualities are a Fruit of the Spirit. How important are these inner qualities to your husband? To you? Write below **I Peter 3: 4**.

7. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers" (I Peter 3: 12). Pray daily for your husband. An example of a prayer is given in **Colossians 1:9-12**. You might consider praying for your husband in such a manner.

Reflection Questions

8. What happens when you focus on what you *can't* have or *don't* have in marriage instead of thanking God for what you *do* have in marriage? How does this struggle affect your relationship with God and your husband?
9. What do you think would happen if you started thanking your husband instead of focusing on his faults? What would his reaction be if you were thankful instead of critical?
10. A wife's first priority is her relationship with Jesus Christ. Her first earthly priority is her relationship with her husband. If you asked your husband, would he say that he *knows* he is your first earthly priority? Or would he say that it is your children (or grandchildren), your job, your friends, or an activity?