MARRIAGE & FAMILY

I've covered Marriage in another PDF, but this time I want to cover it specifically in regards to men and I want to be more broad to include the family and household, not just the marriage unit. There are many scriptures for how to be a good wife and we covered much of them in the Praying Wife PDF, so this week is going to be more one-sided than praying about Marriage in general.

Let's start in the beginning.

> **Genesis 2:18** – *then the Lord said, "it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."*

This is the first time that God sees something that is "*not good*", and it's man's aloneness. It says that God will make a "*helper*" for him. God gives man the responsibility and accountability to be the leader in the home and he gives the woman responsibility and accountability to help him. This does not mean that the wife is only supposed to help the husband and not vice versa. When God looks down on the family, he sees a man in leadership – whether good or bad – but a true leader will of course help those helping him. I read all this in a commentary by David Guzik and it's starting to touch on a little bit of next week's topic so I won't get into any spoilers.

What I get out of this verse is that our husbands need us and God desires for our husband to be a good leader of our home. Jesus was a leader, but remember, he was a servant leader. And we'll get into it more next week, but a godly leader is a humble one.

So let's dive into the different roles that our husbands play.

HOUSEHOLD LEADER

First off, let's look at our husbands and their roll over the whole household.

Genesis 18:19 explains why God chose Abraham: *"that he may command his children and his household...*

to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice." It takes a strong God-fearing man to lead a whole household in the ways of the Lord so this is definitely a verse I'm adding to my prayer Bible.

My prayer might sound something like, "Thank You for this holy calling of my husband's leadership over our household. You know my husband better than anybody and You see a fortitude in him that makes this type of leadership possible. Cause him to be strong in Your word and encouraging to our family to follow in it."

When you think of a man leading a household, one of the verses that may come to your mind is **Joshua 24:15**. Joshua is laying down the law in a final speech to the Israelites. He's essentially telling them, "The time has come. Make your choice," but he doesn't leave them without guidance. He declares to them "*but as for me in my house, we will serve the Lord*". It sounds like he is giving the people a choice, but I think he means it more like a parent giving their child a choice between right and wrong with the underlying implication being that they better choose the right answer.

I want my husband to have this kind of firm line in the sand when it comes to leading our family. I want him to be bold and unwaivering in his decision of faith.

This next verse is directed towards overseers in the church, but if I'm being completely honest, I want my husband to reflect these qualities also.

> **1 Timothy 3:2–5** - *Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?*

I pray my husband always conducts his life above approach, remains the husband of one wife (i.e. me), and remains sober in mind, self-controlled in all situations, respected by his peers based on his admirable conduct, hospitable, friendly, able to teach with patience and discernment, gentle, compromising in relationships, compassionate, and that he fears the Lord above everything.

For our house, one of the routine disagreements we have is in regards to disciplining the kids. He loves to play good cop which often leaves me with no other option but to be the bad guy. So *"managing his household well"* is definitely something that I want to fan into flame for my husband. I know he's not planning to lead a church like this verse states, but the spirit of the verse is that he is a man who is discerning and proactive when it comes to raising his family. And that's the kind of leader our homes need.

CONDUCT

There are several verses that talk about the general conduct we need to have as human beings, which is also very applicable to this topic of Marriage and Family.

Let's look at **1 Corinthians 13: 4–7.** This is the *"love is patient"* verse. This verse is the plumb line for love and it talks about love being patient, humble, and kind. It also speaks about compromise and forgiveness. It says that love is strong, believing, hopeful, and enduring. Charles Spurgeon had this analogy about love bearing all things:

> *"I would, my brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate the pearl oyster. A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot eject the evil, and what does it do but cover it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl. Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, long-suffering, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which has harmed us."*

Not only is this a great verse to pray for our husbands, but if you have any kind of tension in your marriage, I would encourage you to sit with the Lord and allow him to tell you what true love is and does so you address it in your heart before praying for your husband's heart.

Galatians 5:22–23 lays out the fruit of the spirit. When I was beginning my journey with the Lord, I would read this verse and cringe because I felt like I was so far from these virtues. I also felt like I needed to exceed expectations in every single one of these areas. And if I looked at my life, the facts showed that there was great room for improvement in every single one of these areas. As I have gone through the process of sanctification, I have begun to grow into each of these areas without focusing on them

individually. I am currently on the self-control phase of this fruit system. Ask me how it's going...

My prayer for my husband here is that through his desire to get to know God more, he would naturally begin to mature in these areas. My prayer may sound like, "Thank You Lord for laying out the virtues that are most important to You. I ask that You continue Your good work in us and that we would begin to bear much fruit in these areas, especially toward one another."

Ephesians 4:2–3 is another set of verses that reiterate the selfless heart posture that God desires for us to walk with. This particular verse brings up the importance of unity. We may disagree about many topics with our husbands, but there is one thing that we should be united in: Jesus. That is the foundation from which everything else is built and the one place where we can fall back on in agreement if we seem to disagree about everything else. It's our common bond.

If we flip back to **Matthew 19:4–6,** we will read about how a husband is to leave his parents and *"hold fast to his wife"* as they *"are no longer two, but one flesh".* This unity is not only physical, but also spiritual. If you have ever gone through a break up, specifically divorce, then you know just how painful it can be to separate the marriage union and I think that's because God never meant for it to be separated. Unfortunately, culture believes otherwise and if you have find yourself in this situation currently or in the past, just remember: He is a God of redemption and **Romans 8:28** tells us that He will turn everything for good for those who love Him.

If we look at **Colossians 3:14**, this verse tells us that more than anything, we need to choose to love because love unifies us. There are many verses that talk about the importance of unity and finding a deeper common ground with people because there are a lot of things that we can argue about in this world. Which is why it's so important to remember what's most important and not get distracted by tertiary issues. **Romans 14** lays the framework for this and I have found it to be true in my marriage also. It hasn't always been like this, but now that my husband and I both have a mind set on God's continual presence in our everyday lives, it's a little easier to take a step back during an argument, and reset our mind on what's most important.

Here's a prayer to pray for the unity of you and your husband: "Thank You God for bringing my husband and I together in a marriage covenant. I ask that You protect our marriage from the schemes of the enemy

and his attempt to set us against each other. Please remind us that we are no longer two, but one flesh and that a house divided cannot stand. During disagreement, help us to take a step back and remember what's most important and teach us to build our house on Your rock."

FATHERS

Let's take a look at some scriptures that specifically talk about the characteristics of being the father the Lord wants our husbands to be.

Deuteronomy 30:19 reiterates a subject that I brought up a few weeks ago in regards to blessings and curses. There are many verses in Deuteronomy that layout the benefits of following God's word, but in his kindness, God also tells us the results of what happens when we choose not to follow his word. Here in verse 19, he is giving it to us straight. We have only two choices: to choose life or to choose death. He repeats that choosing life will be a blessing that travels down through the generations. If your husband isn't quite motivated to choose life for himself, we can pray that maybe he would do it for the kids.

There's a meme or a phrase that I've seen pop-up a few times and it's in regards to men and their commitment to their families. It goes something like this: you say you would take a bullet for your family, but will you choose to live for them? It's insinuating that a man can exercise his manly protective nature and become a martyr for the sake of his family, but can he choose to do the daily maintenance and responsibility that it takes to live a long healthy life for his family? Choosing to go to the doctor when he needs to. To choose healthier food. To choose to talk to a therapist. To choose to make exercise a regular part of their day.

And with that in mind, if I read Deuteronomy 30:19 again, it also seems to imply that our kids are watching and when we are choosing healthy habits for ourselves, that "life" that we're choosing rolls downhill and encourages our kids to make better decisions for themselves. It's leading by example.

If you flip to **2 Chronicles 20:32** you'll see an example of just that. Jehoshaphat's father walked in the ways of the Lord and did not turn aside from it, therefore Jehoshaphat did the same thing. He had an example to follow.

Isaiah 38:19 says that not only does a father walk with the Lord, but he shares with his children the ways

that he has walked with the Lord and the ways that God has worked in his life as a result. I think it's common for people to walk with the Lord and keep it to themselves with the belief that "my journey is between me and Jesus" and that could not be further from the truth. Our deficiencies, challenges, and the things that we suffer with are the places of our greatest testimonies. When we keep them to ourselves, nobody sees the glory of God and that's the whole point of suffering! To see God's glory through it! So this verse is the requirement that a father needs to talk about the Lord's faithfulness in his life with his children.

Deuteronomy 6:7 is very clear in God's instructions for the leaders of the household in regards to God's laws: *"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."*

Not only should fathers share with their kids about God's past faithfulness, but they are supposed to teach God's laws diligently, talk about them in everyday conversation, and lead by example. This verse says they should talk about God when they are sitting in the house, walking about their life, lying down for bed, and getting up in the morning. In other words, through every aspect of our lives, God should be the main character.

Proverbs 22:6 instructs a father to *"train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

Through the process of sharing our journey with God to the people in our home, it begins to form a foundation in the heart of the children that cannot be shaken. They may go on to make terrible choices in their life, but at the end of the day, when they find themselves in a hard place, they will have a foundation from which they can restart.

This was very much the truth in my personal story. I grew up going to church most Sundays, but it was all religion. Stand up, sit down, memorize, don't fall asleep. It didn't mean anything in my heart so when I grew up and started making decisions from my feelings and my flesh, I found myself in a very dark place. But the good thing about rock-bottom is there's only one way to go and while I was completely incapable of getting myself out of this dark situation, I knew I had one last place left to go: church. I didn't know anything about surrender or Jesus's love for sinners. It was honestly a decision I made out of a lack of

other choices, but because my family had indirectly shown me that there's something more to life than what we can see with their eyes, that's where I went when all other resources had been exhausted. Had I not had that foundation growing up, I don't know what I would have done. And even though I went to church weekly as a kid and it didn't touch my heart, it was subconsciously building a foundation that I would need to fall back on later in life. I say all this to encourage you that even if the children don't seem to be getting it right now, don't underestimate God's power to be doing a work deep, deep inside their heart that they're not even aware of.

Check out **Ephesians 6:4** - *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

As a culture, I think that we have lost the art of speaking to our children's hearts more than speaking to their behaviors. I've said this many times before, but **change the heart and the behaviors will follow** and this is what I think of when I read this Ephesians verse.

It can be a temptation to be the alpha and the dominant disciplinarian when our children make wrong decisions, but ultimately those decisions were made from a broken heart; a heart that is missing something vital about who God is in their life. A heart that knows it's seen and known and loved does not act like an orphan heart. I read a book called *Parenting is Heart Work* which helped me to understand this perspective. To bring a child up *"in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"* would mean that love needs to be the number one focus; the foundation and motivation from which we discipline our children. Remember, God has always been more merciful than he is wrathful.

Titus 2:6 tells the fathers to *"urge the younger men to be self-controlled"* and **Colossians 3:21** tells the father to *"not provoke their children, lest they become discouraged."* While **Proverbs 23:13** instructs fathers to *"not withhold discipline from a a child,"* and **Proverbs 13:24** says *"whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him."*

So how do you balance all these seemingly contradictory instructions about disciplining, yet not provoke the children at the same time? I think it goes back to what I mentioned earlier: our husband was created to lead the household, and when he is in relationship with the Lord, the Holy Spirit inside of him will lead him with discernment through the different situations that call for different parental approaches.

Look at **Luke 15:20**. This is the story of the prodigal son. The son asked for his inheritance to be paid out immediately, and then he went and lived a life of sin and wasted all his money. He may have been concerned that if he went back home, his father would be angry at him or quick to "discipline him with a rod." At the very best, he wondered if his dad would take him back in as a servant and allow him to work in the fields. In this example though, the father saw his son and *"felt compassion"* and ran to him to embrace and kiss him. Immediately after which, he threw a giant party for him.

I love this story because I think as parents when we watch our children make terrible decisions, we want to say things like "I told you so" or "why didn't you listen to me". But here, Jesus tells us this story to remind us that love conquers all and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to make godly decisions on how to approach any given situation.

When I talked about temptation a couple weeks ago, I mentioned being able to see Door #1 and Door #2 through our fleshly eyes. But because we know that God makes a way where there is no way, when we walk and step with the Lord, He will reveal a hidden Door #3, a door no earthly eye could see or imagine. And I think the same was true for the prodigal son. He didn't run back to his dad as soon as he ran out of money. It makes me think he may have been worried about Door #1: his dad's potential anger upon his return or what his dad would do or say to him after he had been living such a reckless life. He didn't think about coming back to his father until he was on the brink of starvation. Perhaps through desperation, he acknowledged Door #2: a possible job working for his dad. But what actually happens? Neither door. His father was not angry nor did he have to work for his dad like a servant. But God opened Door #3: a compassionate, loving father and a welcome home party.

This is what Holy Spirit discernment can do for our husbands. It will take the proper instruction of God and apply it to the proper situation. The situations might even be the same but involve different children who need to be disciplined and taught differently. There is no black-and-white rule across the board when it comes to teaching our kids, and isn't that just like God? To never give us a formula for figuring out His ways. No, instead it feels like a game that's always changing making us 100% reliant on Him to give us the next set of instructions.

I'm shifting gears just a tad. I want to share a chapter of scripture that stood out to me. Let's go to **Numbers 30**. This is a section of text that talks about vows, but what caught my eye was the role that our

men play when it comes to the vows that us women make.

We, women and girls, can speak very quickly without thinking. **Deuteronomy 23:21** says *"if you make a vow to the Lord, your God, you shall not delay, fulfilling it, for the Lord, your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin… You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you shall have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth."* I don't know how many vows I have made in my lifetime, but I'm sure it's more than I can count on my fingers and toes. And most of the time we don't really mean it; we're just talking from emotion or deep hurt. But look at Numbers 30 starting in verse 3. When a woman says something like this and makes a vow, the father has the authority to rebuke that vow and thus release her from it. Verse 5 says *"if her father opposes her on the day that he hears of it,… The Lord will forgive her because her father opposed her."*

To the same degree, look at the next paragraph starting with verse 6. The Bible calls these vows *"thoughtless utterances of our lips."* Here's the point, if our husband hears us make these thoughtless utterances from our lips, and he chooses to rebuke it, the Lord forgives that vow we made. We're no longer bound to it. But if our husband is not keen to rebuke our wrong thinking and instead he slips into a more passive husband role, we stay bound to that vow. Now I understand that Jesus came to free us from the law, but the part of this verse that sticks out to me most is that our husbands and fathers have the power to re-correct our thinking and it's not just physical power; it also affects us and our relationship with God. Being a husband and father is never a passive role. It requires a man to be filled with conviction to diligently walk out his calling every day as provider and protector of the family unit. That's a big weight on his shoulders. A weight that is too big for him to bear on his own. This is why he needs to understand where his strength and endurance comes from and for us to understand that we can support him in that role through our prayers and our good conduct as well.

WIVES

In this topic of Marriage and Family, I have included some verses that speak on the qualities that make a good wife. In a previous video, I mentioned that we, as wives, with our good conduct, can bring power and authority to our husbands; we are the crown of our husbands.

Let's look at **Proverbs 19:14**. It says *"a prudent wife is from the Lord"*. To be a *"prudent wife"* is to exercise wisdom and self-control.

Proverbs 31:10 says *"an excellent wife who can find?"* This word for *"excellent wife"* is the same Hebrew word used in Judges in reference to Gideon when the angel of the Lord called him a *"mighty man of valor"*. When the angel of the Lord called Gideon a mighty man of valor, it was in a moment when Gideon was reminding the angel that he was, in fact, not a mighty man of valor, but he was actually the smallest and weakest in his tribe and family. We will get into this more in Week 9 so stick around for that. This parallel causes me to think about Proverbs 31:10 and encourage you, that the Lord is calling you a prudent and excellent wife, whether you feel like it or not. This is the clothing you need to adorn, essentially dressing for the job that you want not the job that you have; putting off the old self and putting on the new. This is where the strength and fortitude come from to walk out **1 Peter 3:1–2:** *"wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct."*

Remember a couple weeks ago in our conversation about Temptation, I mentioned that once sin starts, it rolls downhill until an outside force stops it. Think about your conduct with your husband. **1 Timothy 3:11** says that wives must be *"dignified," "sober minded,"* and *"faithful in all things."* Do you feel your actions and words towards your husband reflect this? I definitely do not so I can safely say that I am not doing my part to be the person who brings the sin cycle to the foot of the cross and that's something that I would like to do more of so when I draft my prayers for verses like **Colossians 3:18-19** and **Ephesians 5:25-33**, I will definitely be using the words "we" and "us". I want Jesus to do the sanctifying work in my life that causes me to submit to my husband as much as I want Jesus to do the sanctifying work in my husband's life that causes him to respond to me out of love in all things.

There are seasons when your husband may not be your favorite person and I think it's in those seasons when it's important that we stop thinking about everything that is frustrating us and instead we turn our minds to gratitude in regards to our husband. We can use Ecclesiastes to help guide our prayers in this area.

> **Ecclesiastes 4:9–12** - *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a*

man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

My prayer might sound something like, "Thank You Lord for bringing my husband into my life. Thank You for giving me a partner to do life with. Thank You that we can support one another in times of trials. I ask that You cause my husband and I to include You more in our daily conversations and decisions knowing that a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Thank You for providing me with a spouse to love and to share my life with for as long as You have me on this earth."

I'll close out with these last two verses from 1 Peter. **1 Peter 3:7** instructs husbands to live with their wives in an understanding and honoring way. It reminds husbands that while the woman is the weaker vessel, we are still equal heirs in Christ. Interestingly, the last part of this verse seems to insinuate that when a husband is not living with this perspective, their prayers are hindered. I don't know about you, but when my husband is praying, especially for our family, I do not want any of his prayers hindered. With this in mind, skip to **1 Peter 4:8.** It addresses love as being the foundation of everything.

I am praying that our husbands allow the Holy Spirit freedom in their hearts to continue to conform them into vulnerable and compassionate husbands and fathers who first respond out of a sincere love. I pray that the eyes of their hearts are enlightened to see their God-given calling as leader of the household and as an active father in the lives of their children, never neglecting to share how God is working in their own hearts.

God calls our husbands to love us like Jesus loved the church and those are pretty big shoes to fill. Remember to always be kind and gracious with your words and to remove the stick from your own eye before you try to point out the stick in his. This is a great week to pray for your marriage as a whole rather than praying for your husband specifically. Feel free to include "we", "us", "our", and even a "me" in your prayers if the Holy Spirit leads you to do so.

A healthy marriage really sets the enemy off, so walk this week with keen eyes, be quick to hold up your shield of faith to deflect the enemy's fire, and war offensively with the sword of the spirit, that is the word of God.

We are almost done! Only three more weeks to go! Remember, if we stick with it and write **2-3 prayers a day** *(use your Polite house 20 minute candle to help you stay focused!)*, the Bible will practically build itself in the form of a Prayer Bible with 140-180 handwritten prayers.

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CLEAN YOUR HEART

Use this on days that feel hard or create a daily rhythm of surrender and begin every prayer session with it.

This is not a moment to perform, produce, or prove anything. Quiet yourself before God and intentionally lay down pride, distraction, control, and any known sin. Confess what Holy Spirit brings to mind. Release your own agendas, assumptions, and expectations. Choose humility. Choose obedience. Ask God to empty you of self so He can fill you with His Spirit. Do not move forward until your heart is surrendered and your spirit is yielded.

Lord, thank your calling me to draw near to You in this way.[1] Your Word says the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working[2] and You hear the prayer of the righteous.[3] I know my sins have made a separation between You and I.[4] If I cherish sin in my heart, You, Lord, will not listen.[5] Therefore, let me test and examine my ways.[6] Lord, weigh my spirit,[7] for even a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough.[8] Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting![9] Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.[10]

[Selah - pause, listen, repent, forgive, receive grace]

Thank you for cleansing me from what is dishonorable, that I am a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to You, and ready for every good work.[11]

[1] James 4:8; [2] James 5:16; [3] Proverbs 15:29; [4] Isaiah 59:2; [5] Psalm 66:18; [6] Lamentations 3:40; [7] Proverbs 16:2; [8] 1 Corinthians 5:6; [9] Psalm 139:23-24; [10] Psalm 51:10; [11] 2 Timothy 2:21