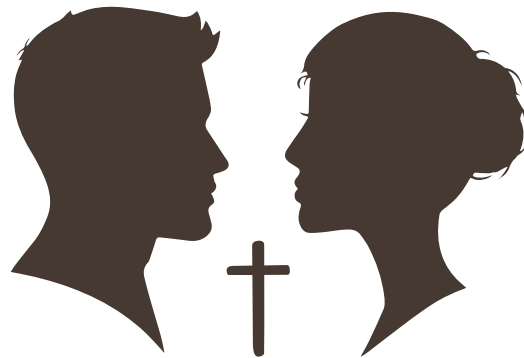


RELATING RIGHTLY

BEING A WIFE WHO GLORIFIES GOD

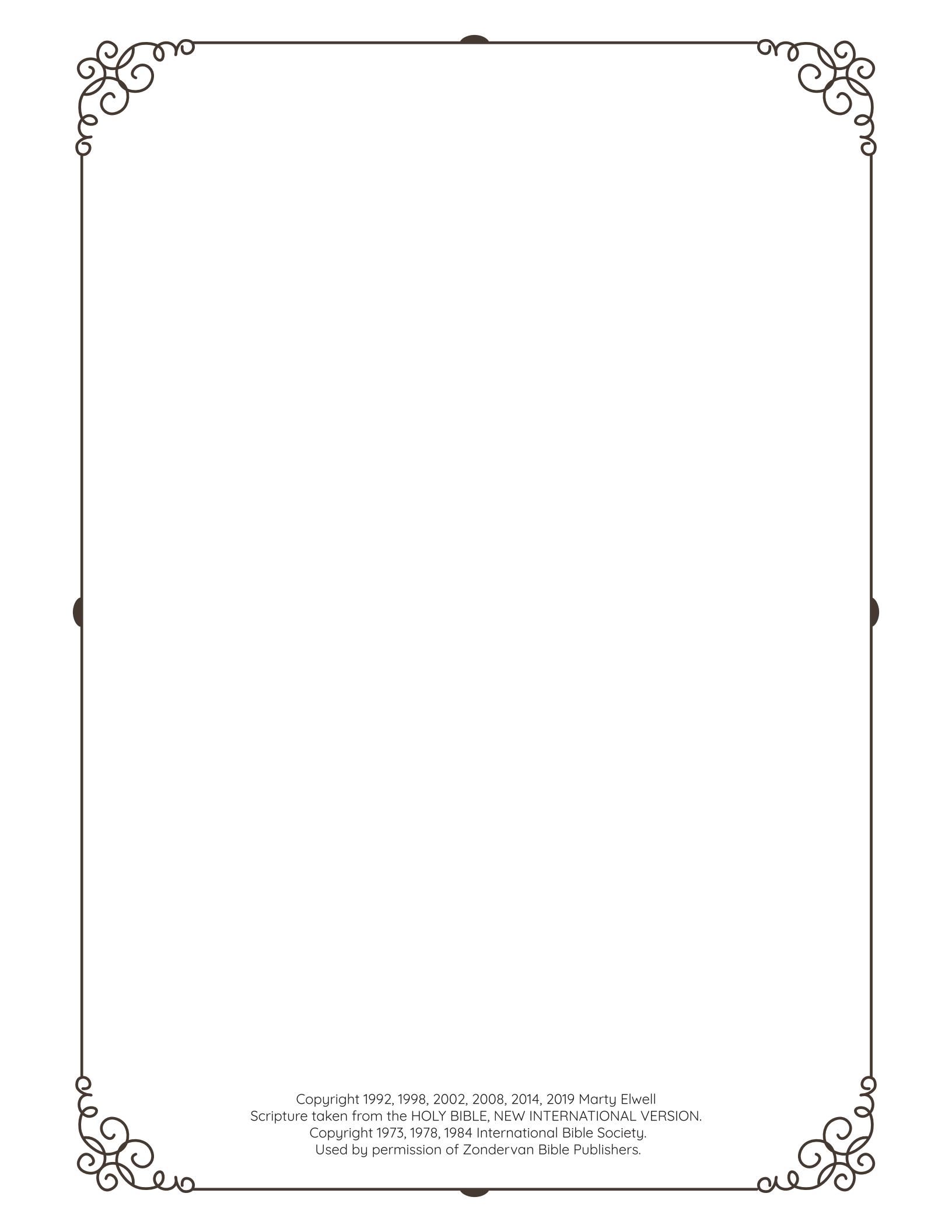
STUDY BY MARTY ELWELL



RELATING RIGHTLY

BEING A WIFE WHO GLORIFIES GOD

STUDY BY MARTY ELWELL



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ULTIMATE OUTCOMES

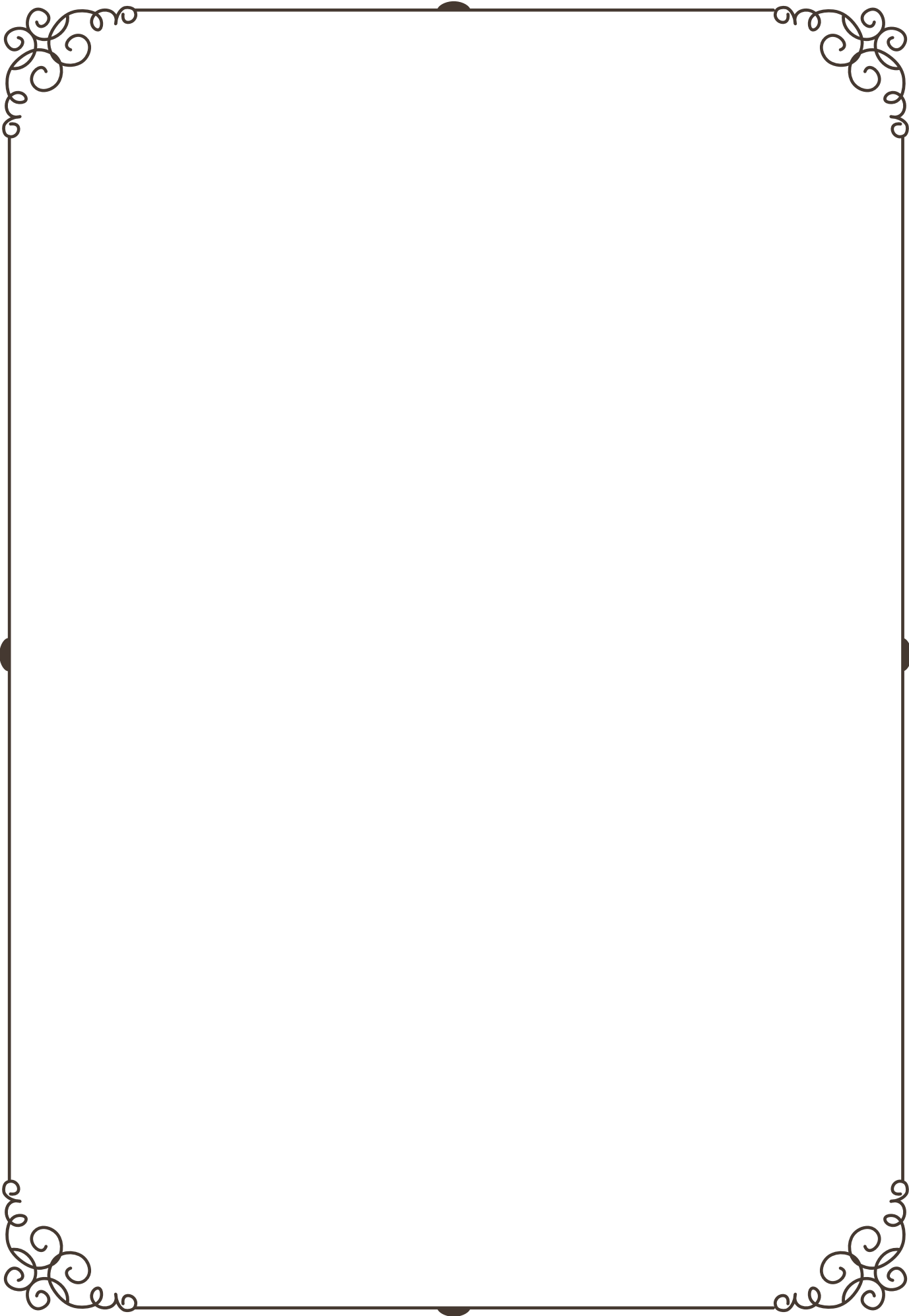
WHY IDEAS MATTER.

Ultimate Outcomes is a non-profit organization founded on the fruit of the 30 plus years Pastor Richard Elwell and his wife Marty spent in church ministry, developing studies that would help their congregants discern and apply God's truth. Richard was a firm believer that the outcomes in our lives are a result of what ideas we choose to believe and follow.

After Richard died of a rare liver disease in 2018, Ultimate Outcomes has taken on the mission of sharing the Elwell's insights with all people who desire to live a better life and are willing to look to God for understanding of the way they are to go. To that end it makes available for free download on its website: Bible studies, Sunday school curriculum, and sermon podcasts.

Richard earned a Master of Divinity degree from the International School of Theology and was the founding and senior pastor at University Park Church, San Bernardino, CA for over 30 years. His passion was always to make God's truth understandable and applicable to all who hunger for it. Marty holds a Master's Degree in Teaching Processes from Claremont Graduate University. Her passion has been to train women and provide curriculum for parents who want to raise up their children up in the ways of the Lord.

<https://www.ultimateoutcomes.org>

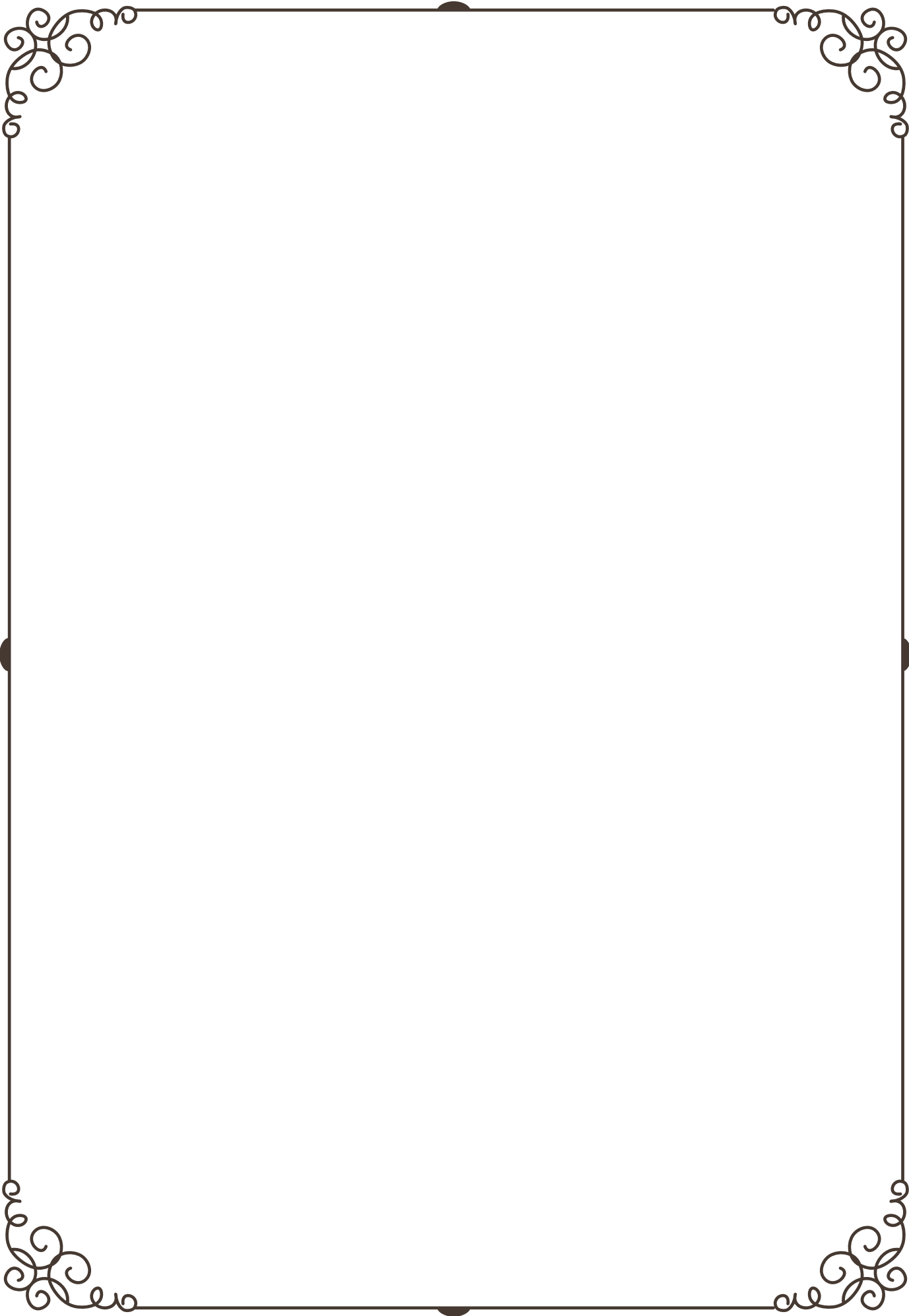


RELATING RIGHTLY

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Instructions for Teachers/Mentors: Write out your own testimony of what learning the principles from "Relating Rightly" has done in your life and marriage. As you teach the lessons, Insert your own illustrations and examples. The answers in blue are what are most important to state. The red answers expand understanding.

INTRODUCTION

When my oldest daughter was about twelve years old, I started an old-fashioned girls club for her and a group of friends. We would get together once a month at my father's old farmhouse to spend the night. The girls would cook, do crafts, play games, and practice proper manners. The focus, however, was for them to learn what it meant to be a woman of noble character according to the Bible. To that end I looked to Proverbs 31 and began to write a simple study for them. I soon realized that what I was learning was valuable for me and would be beneficial for the women of the church my husband was pastoring.

The outcome of my 25-year endeavor is a two-year discipleship program, "More Valuable than Rubies: Becoming a Wife of Noble Character." The study, affectionately nicknamed "Rubies," is designed to help women understand and live out biblical principles from Proverbs 31 and related scriptures. While the whole study is immensely valuable, I realized that the first three lessons are of the utmost importance as they teach a woman how to relate rightly to her husband. Learning those principles and applying them to my life took me from being a rebellious, unsubmitted wife to one who was truly a benefit and blessing to my husband and in being so brought honor and glory to God.

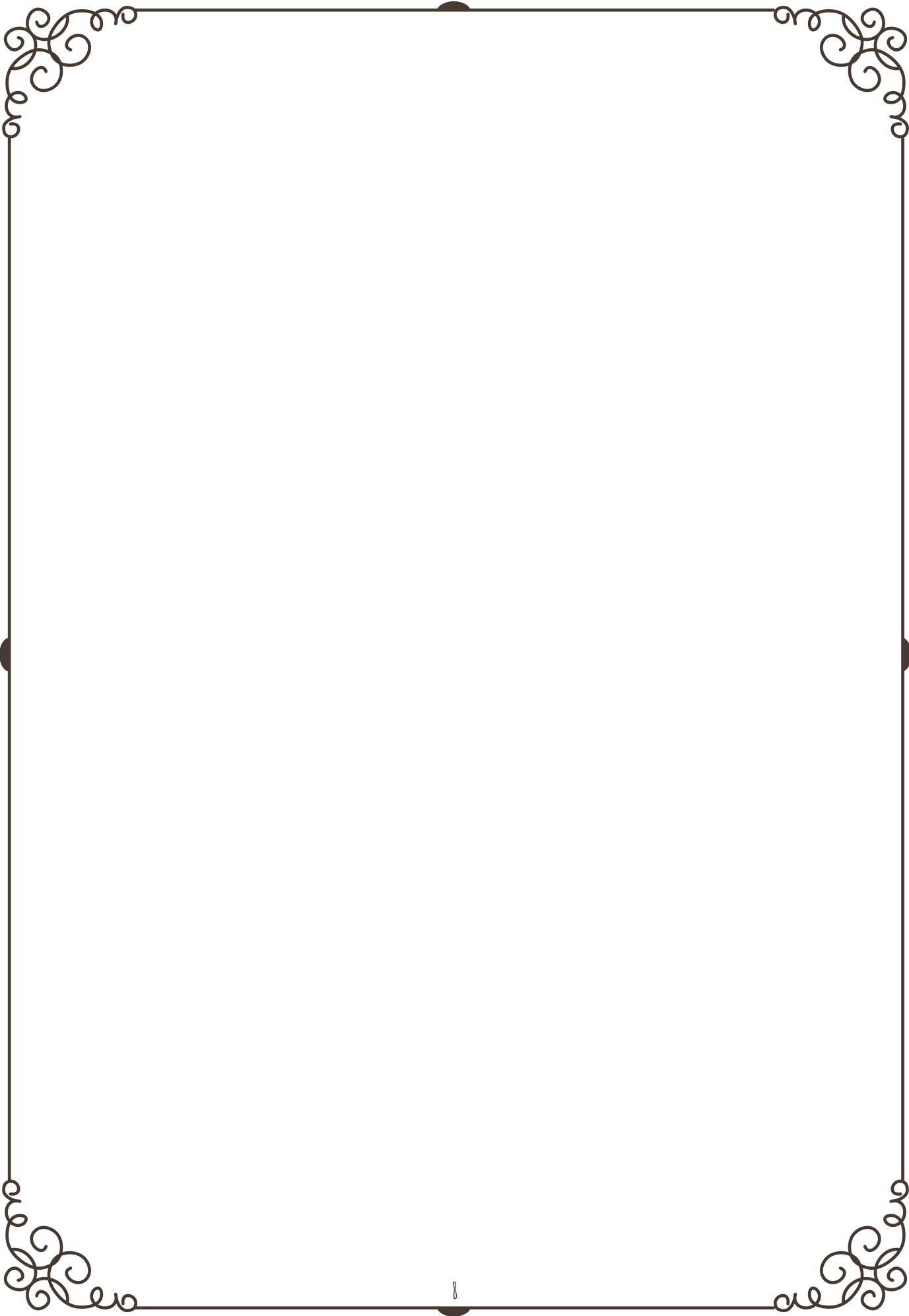
In the last year of my husband's life when he was suffering from the ravages of a rare liver disease, by God's grace I had become the wife he needed. I can say that when he died after 41 years of marriage, our relationship, while not perfect, was close to what God intended it to be. My only regret is that I didn't know when I was younger what I understood by the end of my husband's life. I have resolved to do what I can to fulfill the directive of Titus 2:3 which says for older women to train the younger women to love their husbands.

This is not a how to manual or a checklist on how to become a better wife. It simply examines what the Bible says and compares the outcomes of applying or not applying the biblical principles. When he opened a counseling session my husband would say, "God is smarter than we are and we do well when we understand what he says to do and apply it to our life." Then he would ask, "Are you willing to set aside your own preconceptions, look to God's Word and do what it says?" If you can answer yes to that question, this study will be of benefit to you. If your answer is no or you are unsure, take a step back, pray and ask God to open your heart before you proceed.

The focus of this study is on what you need to do to relate rightly to your husband, not what he needs to do. You are responsible for yourself and your actions, not your husband's. I pray that by working through this material, you will gain greater understanding of what it means to relate rightly to your husband and in doing so glorify God.

Marty Elwell

At this point use a visual to help the women understand the focus of this study. Have them write their name on one half of a piece of paper and their husband's name on the other half. Have them tear the paper in half, crumple up the piece with their husband's name, and throw that piece away. Have them hold up the half with their name and say, "This is who I am responsible for. I am not responsible for my husband and what he does or doesn't do."



SESSION 1

UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN OF MARRIAGE



BOTH MAN AND WOMAN WERE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

1. What is different about people from all other living things that God created?

We were created in God's image to reflect his character and demonstrate his nature (attributes), to serve his purposes and bring honor and glory to him. God is a personal being with a mind, will, and emotions. We also have those attributes, which means we can make moral choices, develop concepts, invent things and respond to God, something animals can't do.

2. Describe the character of God, the attributes that He has called us to reflect.

Holy, righteous, faithful, merciful, trustworthy, kind, long-suffering, patient, just, loving, forgiving, compassionate, self-sacrificing, creative, humble, etc.

3. What is the only way we can truly reflect God's character?

Through a connection to Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in us. It is important to remember that we maintain that connection by uncovering and confessing any personal sin that would separate us from him. (John 15:5).

4. What is the implication of God creating both the man and the woman in his image?

They are equal in status. Together they more fully reflect the image of God. Each is only one half of the picture. They need each other. Men and women tend to reflect different attributes. Their union is for the purpose of bringing greater honor and glory to God.

5. How should being created in the image of God affect the way we think about ourselves and live out our lives?

We belong to him and are a privileged people. Our passion should be to reflect and honor God in the way we live our lives. We should take care of what is his in the way he desires and make choices that reflect and honor him. We should strive to be filled with him to reflect his character.

WOMAN WAS CREATED WITH A SPECIAL PURPOSE

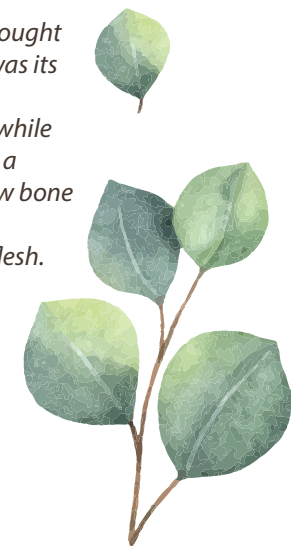
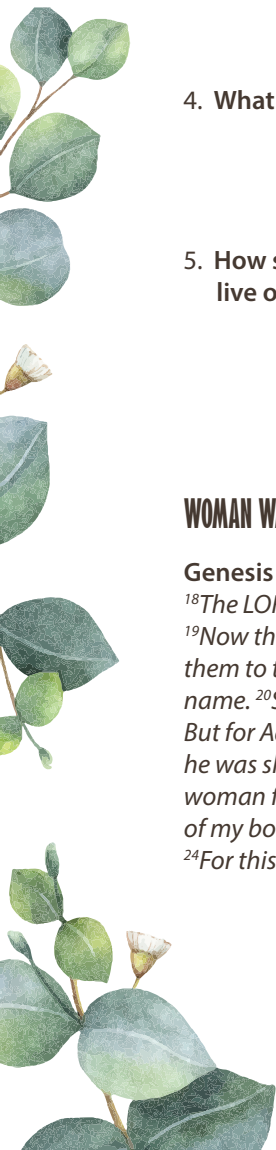
Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

²⁴For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.



1. Why did God create Eve? (vs. 18-20)

Among all God created there was no suitable helper for Adam and he needed one to complete him. God had a design and a purpose for the man and the woman, that through their union they would be able to more fully reflect him.

2. The word helper, which is used to describe the role of a woman in relationship to her husband, is the same Hebrew word used in two other ways in the Old Testament: a king coming alongside to help another king and God coming alongside to help man. Thinking about this use of the word helper, what then does the word mean in terms of the wife's role?

It is an honorable role. She is not the leader but she enables the leader to accomplish what needs to be done. She is desperately needed and works alongside the leader. What is a leader able to accomplish if he doesn't have an accomplished helper?

3. What is the equality that both men and women have?

Equality of status. They have an equal standing before God. They are both necessary and valuable. Working together, they enable one another and the family to function well, the way God designed.

4. What is the inequality between men and women?

There is inequality of function; they have a different design and capabilities. Their bodies and brains function differently. Differentiation in the structure of the brain begins in the womb. They are physically created differently to fulfill different roles and functions.

5. Why is it important to understand the difference between equality of status and equality of function?

You don't think you have to be doing the same thing to be equal. You recognize that each has a different role and design. In seeing that, it is easier to accept those differences and not enter into a competition. You value what your husband contributes more if you don't think he needs to be like you and vice versa.

6. How can a woman be a good helper to a man?

By reflecting God's character and growing in the image of God through a connection to Christ. By being submitted to God's design and faithful to the role God has called her to fulfill. By not trying to take on her husband's responsibilities or be his leader but rather to help him fulfill his design. By not being focused on her own needs but on being what her husband needs. By appreciating and valuing her husband as a man.

7. What will being a good helper do for a woman?

Since it is according to design and therefore of God, it will ultimately be more satisfying and definitely bring more beneficial results.

8. What is the problem if the helper wants to be the leader?

God's purposes aren't served and he isn't glorified through their union. It creates a power struggle which harms the relationship and their ability to work together for a higher purpose. The leader will most likely abdicate his position.



Illustration: To illustrate the different roles and their value, Richard would have couples picture a beautiful cathedral likening the man's role to the outside roof and walls which cover and protect and the woman's role to the beautiful inside pillars which support and stabilize the roof and walls.

9. What does it mean that a man and a woman become one flesh? (vs. 24)

They are joined together in a unique relationship that is unlike any other, one being-two persons. They become united in purpose; nothing can happen to one without the other being affected. They belong to each other and give up selfish interests. The sexual union is meant to establish the one flesh relationship.

10. Why isn't a one-flesh relationship between a husband and wife to be broken?

God says not to because it is a sacred bond. It would be like tearing your own body apart. It would leave such a bad wound that the body would never be the same.



Illustration: *In premarital counseling Pastor Richard always used the illustration of mixing clay together to demonstrate the one flesh relationship. If you mix a yellow and blue ball of clay together you will end up with a new color, green. If you break the ball apart you will only get green, not yellow and blue again. Once joined in marriage, a couple cannot be what they were before, two separate individuals. They are linked together in a way that is not to be broken.*

11. Why is it important for you to remember that marriage is a one-flesh relationship?

You don't even consider dissolving the marriage. You do what needs to be done to make it work. You never threaten him with divorce. You realize you are not your own person; to do what you want apart from the other. You are fully committed to sustaining the relationship.

While imprisoned by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote down a beautiful sermon for the wedding of his niece: "Today you are young and very much in love and you think that your love will sustain your marriage. It won't. But your marriage can sustain your love!" Eric Metaxas, Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy (Thomas Nelson, 2011), page 458

Simply put: Love doesn't sustain your marriage; it's your marriage that sustains the love.

12. How do priorities within a marriage change when a couple has children?

Children are an add-on to the family, not the creation of one. The most important relationship is the husband/wife one as it is foundational to a healthy family. A wife should always focus most on maintaining a right relationship with her husband and not put the children before him. Children's needs must be met but they should not be made a higher priority than one's spouse..

13. What happens if a wife places a higher priority on her children than on her husband?

The family structure is out of order and is weakened. The marriage is more likely to collapse once the children are gone. The husband is isolated and out of place in his own home. He may withdraw and resent the children. The children never learn how a properly ordered marriage is to function.

PERSONAL PRAYER

Write out a prayer for the work you would like God to do in you as you go through the study.

SESSION 2

BECOMING VALUABLE AS A WIFE



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER IS MORE VALUABLE THAN RUBIES

Proverbs 31:10

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

1. What makes rubies so valuable?

Their rarity, beauty, purity, strength. They aren't something that can be manufactured; they are a work of God. Rubies are actually the rarest of gems; they are only found in a few places. They score a 9 out of 10 on a strength scale.

It is interesting to note that some inclusions (flaws) in a ruby can make it more valuable because of the beauty of the reflection when it is cut, while other inclusions lessen its value.

2. What does noble mean?

Acts in accord with what is true and right. Virtuous, good, honest, upright and above reproach. She has integrity, which comes from the same root word as integer, a complete entity, meaning she is the same on the inside as she is on the outside.

3. Why is a wife of noble character worth far more than valuable jewels?

As she is the helper her husband needs, her worth can't be calculated. She is irreplaceable. She impacts lives for generations to come. She passes on things that have value to the next generation.

4. Why isn't a wife of noble character easy to find?

Being a noble wife isn't easy; it requires hard work and takes consistent effort as it goes against our sinful nature. Most women live by a temporal worldview, rather than an eternal one. Most women have bought into the thinking of the world, have few good biblical models and lack biblical training. They are looking to live an easy self-indulgent life, rather than a noble, self-sacrificing one submitted to God.

Proverbs 12:4

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

1. What does a crown do for a person?

It sets a person apart from the common and ordinary and instills respect. It identifies who the person is and his position. It brings him or her honor.

2. In what way would a wife be a crown to her husband?

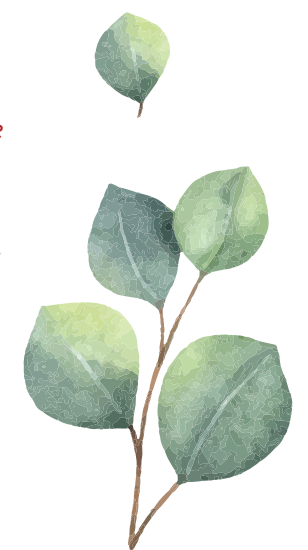
By serving God in the way she has been called to, she would bring greater honor to his position, increase his respectability, affect the way people respond to him, and set him apart from others. What a woman says about her husband forms people's view of him. A woman who respects and honors her husband causes others to do the same.

3. What does it mean that a disgraceful wife is "like decay in his bones"?

She's like a disease that destroys him from the inside little by little. She may not even be aware of the destruction she is causing because it isn't visible on the outside.

4. How can a wife bring disgrace to her husband?

By not giving him the honor she has been called to and not being the woman God has designed her to be. By seeing her husband as her helper, rather than herself as his helper. By undermining his leadership, disrespecting his person and/or position, and treating him like one of her children. By focusing on and sharing the negative.





A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER SUBMITS TO HER HUSBAND'S LEADERSHIP

Ephesians 5:22-24

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

1. What is submission?

Freely and willfully putting your whole self under the authority of someone else. You do what is asked or required of you without struggle, holding yourself back or a wrong attitude.

2. Why are women to submit to their husbands?

God has told them to. It is his design for the marital relationship. It demonstrates a love for and obedience to God. God wouldn't command it if it weren't a good thing for the woman to do. Submission puts a woman under her husband's and God's protection.

Note from Marty: I remember very clearly when I finally chose to submit to my husband's leadership. I was standing at the kitchen counter in the first house we owned. Everything in me was rebelling at the idea of having to submit. I had been a radical feminist before becoming a Christian and marrying my husband. Standing there, I knew I needed to change my attitude and said to God, "You know Lord that I don't want to submit, but because you say that is what I am supposed to do, I am going to do my best to do it with your help and by your grace." At that moment, my life and marriage took a huge leap forward. Did I submit perfectly from then on? Of course not, but my heart's desire became to do what is right and a lot of struggle and conflict between my husband and me came to an end.

3. Why do women view submission as a negative thing?

They think they are giving up their power or rights and see it as a lower position. It goes against the flesh as they want to do what they want, not what is required of them. They think of it as something taken away instead of freely given. They view it as a position of weakness, rather than strength.

4. What does it mean that a woman is to submit to her husband in everything? (vs. 24)

You don't pick and choose when to submit. By not submitting to your husband you are not submitting to God. We can express our disagreement or dissatisfaction, but we make any lack of order worse when we are out of order. We can only not submit when our husbands are clearly asking us to do something immoral, illegal or dangerous.

Illustration from Marty's life: I remember one time in particular when I didn't feel good about a plan Richard was making and gave my opinion and an alternative idea. The problem was that I felt very strongly that I was right and didn't let it go. I continued to emphatically repeat my thoughts to him. After a few days, Richard finally said to me, "Marty I can see your point and I think you are right, but because of the way you dealt with me I can't follow your suggestion. The shock of him saying that caused me to modify my behavior. I learned to state my opinion once and then let it go. I stopped living under the illusion that I had to say something over and over to be heard.

5. What would happen if the church weren't submitted to Christ in everything?

It wouldn't be his church and act in accordance with his will. It couldn't fulfill its purpose to bring honor and glory to him. It wouldn't be a witness to the world. It would lose its power and effectiveness.



6. What are indications that a woman is not submissive to her husband?

She does what she wants rather than what would please her husband. That means:

- *She pouts, badgers or manipulates if he disagrees with her.*
- *If her husband opposes her she will go ahead and do what she wants.*
- *She doesn't inform her husband of what she is doing or tries to hide things from him.*
- *She undermines his decisions and position. She questions him about everything. She judges his actions. She speaks poorly of him and his decisions, particularly to the children.*
- *She lets the children do things that he is opposed to them doing.*

7. What is the result when a woman is not submissive to her husband?

God won't be glorified through the marriage. The man will never become the leader God intended and the family is out of order. That means:

- *There is conflict, lack of contentment, and disorder. The wife is unprotected.*
- *Everyone is confused as to what their role is. It sets a bad example for the children.*
- *Women serve Satan's purposes which are to tear down and destroy, rather than God's purpose of building up and producing blessing.*
- *The wife thinks she doesn't need her husband.*
- *Her husband withdraws. He keeps quiet. He resigns himself to keeping quiet about his wants.*

8. What is the result when a woman is submissive to her husband?

The family works the way God intended. God is reflected through the marital relationship.

That means:

- *There is contentment, trust, and harmony.*
- *Since she is not struggling against God or her husband, God's plan for the family can be fulfilled. Each member can fulfill God's purpose and become what God designed.*
- *There is connection and delight with each other and with God.*

Remember: To be willing to do something that one is not naturally inclined to do demonstrates a real connection to God and strength of character. Submission is an act of the will that comes through a position of strength and reliance on God. Submission requires dying to self and being alive in Christ so that Christ would be glorified.

JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE OF SUBMISSION

Philippians 2:1-13

¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.



1. According to the following verses, what should we be like if we are united with Christ?

Vs. 2 *We would be like-minded, having the same love, be one in Spirit and purpose.*

Vs. 3 *We wouldn't act out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. We would be humble, thinking of others as better than ourselves.*

Vs. 4 *We would look out for the interests of others.*

2. How do the characteristics of being united with Christ relate to your relationship with your husband?

Vs. 2 *I would love him like Christ loves him with self-sacrificing love. I would seek to have the same mind and purpose. There would be unity in the relationship.*

Vs. 3 *I would not strive in opposition to him. I would think of him as better than myself.*

Vs. 4 *I would look out for his interests more than my own.*

3. What are not to be the motives for anything we do? (vs. 3)

Selfish ambition and vain conceit. Ambition is the earnest desire for some type of achievement or distinction. Selfish means it is purely for self, not for the good of others. Vain conceit is personal vanity, excessive pride in oneself.

What do those motives result in?

Those motives result in our pursuing our own interests rather than God's interests, thinking we are better or know more than God and others. They are the opposite of dying to self, so they result in broken relationships, disharmony.

4. Even though Christ is God, what did he do? (vs. 6-8)

He didn't consider equality with the Father something to be grasped but made himself nothing, took on the nature of a servant, humbled himself and became obedient even unto death. He didn't hold on to his status and privileges as God but took on human form to serve and do what is right.

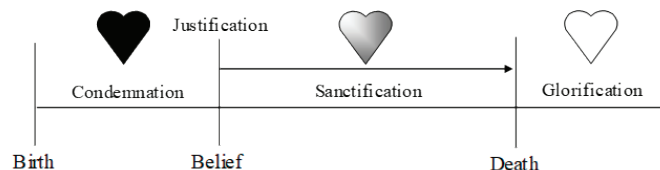
What was the result of Christ doing that? (vs. 9-11)

God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name above all names. His purpose in coming to earth was fulfilled. He saved us.

5. Because of what Christ did, what are we to do? (vs. 12)

We need to obey and work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Salvation consists of two parts: justification and sanctification. When we confess faith in Jesus and what he did on the cross, we are justified, saved from the penalty of our sin, and no longer in a state of condemnation. Sanctification begins at the point of justification and is the process of being made holy by the work of the Holy Spirit in us; we are being delivered from the power of sin. Glorification is the end result when in death we enter into Christ's eternal presence, completely free from the power and presence of sin.



Keeping in mind the two parts of salvation and that salvation isn't based on works (Eph. 2:8-9), what does it mean to work out our salvation with fear and trembling?

It means that we give ourselves over to the process of sanctification (being made holy), recognizing that there are dire consequences if we don't submit to the process. We submit to Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in us convicting us of sin. We uncover and confess our sin, not the sins of others. The focus is on being made right ourselves, not having God change others. We don't want to be left the way we are.





6. What do you need to learn and apply from Philippians 2:1-13?

To empty myself and be filled with Christ so that I am like-minded and have his purposes in mind, so that I can die to self and look to the interests of others. I need to have the nature of a servant that comes through being united with Christ. I need to give up the idea of gaining power. Real power comes through having a positive influence through a connection to Christ.

7. Why does God do that work in you? (vs. 13)

So we desire to do his will and act according to his good purposes.

8. What will be the result of God doing that work in you?

God will be glorified. There will be order, harmony, and blessing in relationships. The outcome of our life will be good. Our children will see the truth modeled and experience the blessings of a rightly ordered family.

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

9. If we want to be truly great in the kingdom of God, what do we have to become?

We have to become a humble servant like Jesus, not exercising our own will but submitting to the Father's will. It's not about getting what we want but doing what God wants.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Rate the degree to which you demonstrate the following characteristics in the way you relate to your husband. The symbols mean: -- (minus sign) I don't do this at all, 0 (zero) I do this some but not a lot, + (plus sign) This characterizes my behavior

		-	0	+
1	I don't go my own way or make major decisions apart from my husband.			
2	I don't badger or try to manipulate my husband when I want something he doesn't.			
3	I don't bad mouth my husband to my children or other people.			
4	I don't make snide remarks or give nasty looks to my husband.			
5	I don't try to hide things I am doing or have done from my husband.			
6	I don't undermine my husband's decisions, either subtly or overtly. I don't question my husband's actions or motives.			
7	I don't do things I know my husband doesn't like for me to do.			
8	I don't let my children do things I know my husband doesn't like for them to do.			
9	My husband can ask me to do legitimate things that I really don't want or like to do and I will readily do them for him.			
10	I daily seek conviction of sin in terms of how I may be relating wrongly to my husband, confess, and repent of it.			

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:



SESSION 3

BEING A TRUSTWORTHY SPOUSE



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER IS TRUSTWORTHY

Proverbs 31:11

Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

1. What is a definition of confidence?

Absolute trust, being fully assured. Comes from the Latin, con-fi-deo – with faith in God. Self-confidence is an oxymoron.

2. What causes a husband to have full confidence in his wife?

Knowing she is submitted to God and his leadership. He is certain his wife knows what is right to do and will do it. She has proven herself trustworthy. She sees her purpose is to bring God glory in the way she lives her life. She isn't motivated by selfish ambition and vain conceit.

3. How would a man lose confidence in his wife?

By not being able to count on her to do what is right and fulfill her role. She would demonstrate by her actions that she is living for self, rather than for God. Her desire would be to pursue self-interest rather than please God or her husband. She would choose her desires or perceptions of what is right, rather than follow his or God's.

4. What does it mean to lack nothing of value?

You have everything that is truly needed for a good life, anything really worth having.

5. Why does a man lack nothing of value when his wife is trustworthy and submitted to God and his leadership?

Because material possessions and everything else are worth little compared to a home that is under God's authority and structured according to his truth.

HAVING NOTHING IS BETTER THAN HAVING A QUARRELSOME WIFE

Proverbs 21:9, 19

⁹*Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.*

¹⁹*Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.*

1. Why is it better to live in poverty than with a quarrelsome wife?

One can never be content or experience peace if there isn't harmony in the home, no matter how much material wealth one has. Saying: happy wife = happy life

2. What are signs that a woman is quarrelsome and contentious?

She is never content and always has something to complain about. Nothing is ever enough or right, which makes for a tense and argumentative spirit in the home. She is arrogant, self-centered and a fault finder. She wants to change her husband rather than look at what is wrong with her. She is not submitted to God's or her husband's authority.

3. How does a wife become quarrelsome and contentious?

By not being right with God. She has a lack of gratitude, which brings a lack of contentment. She takes the focus off what is good and puts it on what she thinks is wrong or less than perfect. She thinks of herself more highly than she ought. She doesn't see herself for what she is, a sinner in need of forgiveness. She thinks of herself as righteous and her husband as not. She thinks she is smarter than her husband and he needs to do what she says.





4. What will be the outcome for a wife if she is quarrelsome and contentious?

She will never experience the joyful, abundant life that God desires for her. Her marriage and family will lack harmony and be torn down. She will never be content. Her husband will avoid coming home or spending time with her. He will shut down and become uncommunicative for fear of setting her off. She will be cut off from God and the blessing of doing things his way.

Note: A quarrelsome and contentious wife wants a good husband and home but she will never get it because she tries to make it happen on her own apart from submission to God and her husband.

FIGHTS AND QUARRELS COME FROM A WRONG FOCUS

James 3:13-4:6

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

¹What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1. What demonstrates a good life? (vs. 13)

Deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

2. What is a simple definition of wisdom?

Wisdom is applied knowledge, knowing what is right to do and doing it.

3. Psalm 111:10a says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." A summary of Psalm 34 shows that the fear of the Lord is knowing who God is, that he knows and sees everything we do, and we will be held accountable to him for our thoughts, words and actions. Why is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?

It causes us to examine our thoughts and actions and whether or not they are pleasing to God. If we want to please God, we will choose to follow his way which will lead us on a path of wise choices.

4. What creates a disordered life and what do those things mean? (vs. 14)

Harboring bitter envy (thinking you deserve more and resenting what others have) and selfish ambition (trying to get what you want on your own apart from God). She is serving Satan's purposes, not God's.

5. What is a woman like who harbors bitter envy and selfish ambition?

She functions outside of God's plan, will and protection. She wants what others have and she doesn't (husband's position) and wants things God hasn't given her (man's role). She wants to be on top and in control. She is contentious, self-centered, disorderly, evil, hateful, quarrelsome, discontent.

6. What is the wisdom like that comes from heaven? (vs. 17)

Peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit. It is harmonious, thoughtful, under authority, forgiving, understanding, godly



7. What is the result of being full of that wisdom? (vs. 18)

You reap a harvest of righteousness. You live a life rightly related to God, yourself and others. You have a beneficial effect on your husband, family and community and experience the blessing of that. Righteous is what is morally right or good, virtuous.

8. What do quarrels and fights come from? (vs. 1-2)

Evil, covetous desires. Wanting things that aren't of God.

9. Why don't we receive when we ask? (vs. 3)

We ask with selfish motives, to spend on ourselves rather than what God wants.

10. What happens when we choose friendship with the world? (vs. 4)

We become an enemy of God. We are Satan's pawn. We work against God's purposes.

11. In what ways do women choose friendship with the world?

They put more credence in modern psychological thought and feminist philosophy, etc., rather than God's truth. They forget what is eternally important and are not operating from a biblical worldview. They pursue temporal reward (material possessions, careers, etc.) and focus on accomplishment and satisfaction outside the family. They are shortsighted.

12. Why do women choose friendship with the world?

It appeals to the sinful nature and is easier. God's way requires humility and submission. They lose sight of the eternal and have a wrong view of what is success and what is truly valuable. They want success or prestige in the eyes of the world rather than measuring worth by what God says is valuable. They desire to be successful or in charge rather than humble and obedient.

13. Why do we become an enemy of God when we choose friendship with the world?

God's purposes are not served. We bring harm, not good, to ourselves and others. You can't love both God and the world as they are in opposition to each other.

14. What is the ultimate cost of women choosing friendship with the world?

They forfeit God's best. Neither women nor men will ever become what God intends. The family is weak and doesn't function effectively. Marriages fall apart. They become hard hearted, bitter, lonely old women. The things of the world (career, etc.) won't last while family will.

15. Who does God give grace to? (vs. 6)

The humble.

16. Who are the humble?

Those who see themselves for who they really are and God for who he is. Those who are self-aware and recognize their sin and their need for forgiveness. Those who don't think too highly of themselves. Those who are teachable and accept correction.

17. Why is humility a critical character trait for a follower of Christ to have?

It puts us in right relationship with God. Humility is what makes a woman teachable and enables her to think of others more than herself. With humility we are willing to serve others as Christ serves us. It is other focused without concern for personal benefit. The irony of humility is that it receives the greatest possible benefit, Christ himself. Humility enables us to self-reflect. We don't have to be right; we just have to want to be made right. It enables us to be wise.

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER PURSUES PEACE

Proverbs 12:20-21

²⁰ There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace. ²¹ No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.

Psalms 34:12-14

¹² Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, ¹³ keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. ¹⁴ Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Romans 12:17-18

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 14:19

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

1. What makes something evil?

It hurts us and/or others. It is against God and his good design for his creation.

2. What happens to those who do evil?

Their life is full of trouble and they are separated from God and other people. It leads to death. It makes them useful to Satan for his purposes to be served.

3. What happens to those who pursue peace?

They experience God's presence and blessing. They live in harmony with God and others.

4. How does a wife do evil?

By not being the woman that God has called her to be and submitting to his design and purposes. She focuses on self rather than doing good. She tears down rather than builds up. She tries to change her husband rather than look at herself and her own sin.

5. How does a wife pursue peace?

By living according to God's truth through a relationship with Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in her. She is not promoting herself or pushing for her own way. She doesn't focus on others and what they are doing wrong; rather, she looks at herself and whether she is doing what is right. She doesn't take offense or return evil for evil.

6. Why does pursuing peace make a wife trustworthy?

She knows what is right to do and is empowered to do it. She lives according to God's truth. When she is wrong, she asks for and finds forgiveness and can turn and do what is right. It makes her husband feel safe.

7. What can you learn from these Scriptures?

Good comes to those who seek peace and do what is right. Evil will come to those who don't seek God and the good of others. The way to overcome evil is to do good to anyone who brings harm to you. It is up to God to make whatever is wrong, right. Not reacting to evil, but instead returning good, defeats evil.



Remember: If you don't respond in the flesh when your husband does or says something that hurts you, you protect both of you. You need to do what is right regardless of what your husband is doing. It is important to remember to do the following when in conflict:

- Don't raise your voice or interrupt.
- Don't say anything you can't take back.
- Don't make accusatory statements or use hyperbole. ("You always..." "You never...")
- Use the pronoun I instead of you. Say "I feel hurt when ..." instead of "You hurt me when..."
- Don't try to defend or justify yourself.
- Acknowledge and apologize for anything he says that is true.
- Stick to the issue at hand. Don't bring up other problems or past issues.
- Don't point out your husband's shortcomings.

Note: It is often best to schedule a time to talk, rather than try to work out a problem in the heat of the moment.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Evaluate how you are doing in your role as a wife by rating how well you demonstrate the personal characteristics of a trustworthy wife.

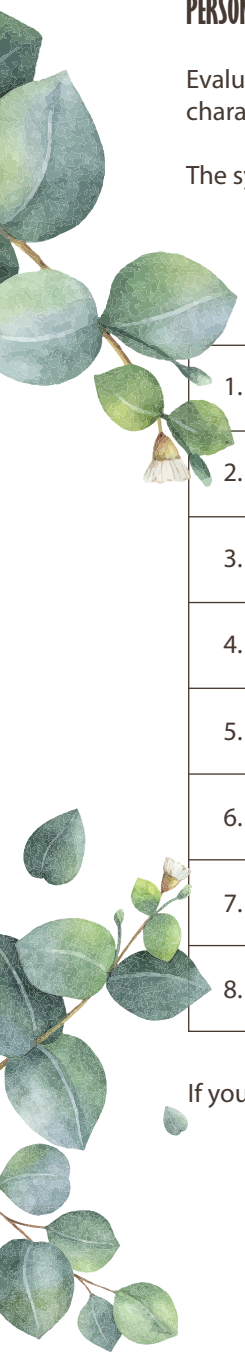
The symbols mean:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| – (minus sign) | hardly at all |
| 0 (zero) | some but not a lot |
| + (plus sign) | a lot. |

Personal Characteristics of a Trustworthy Wife

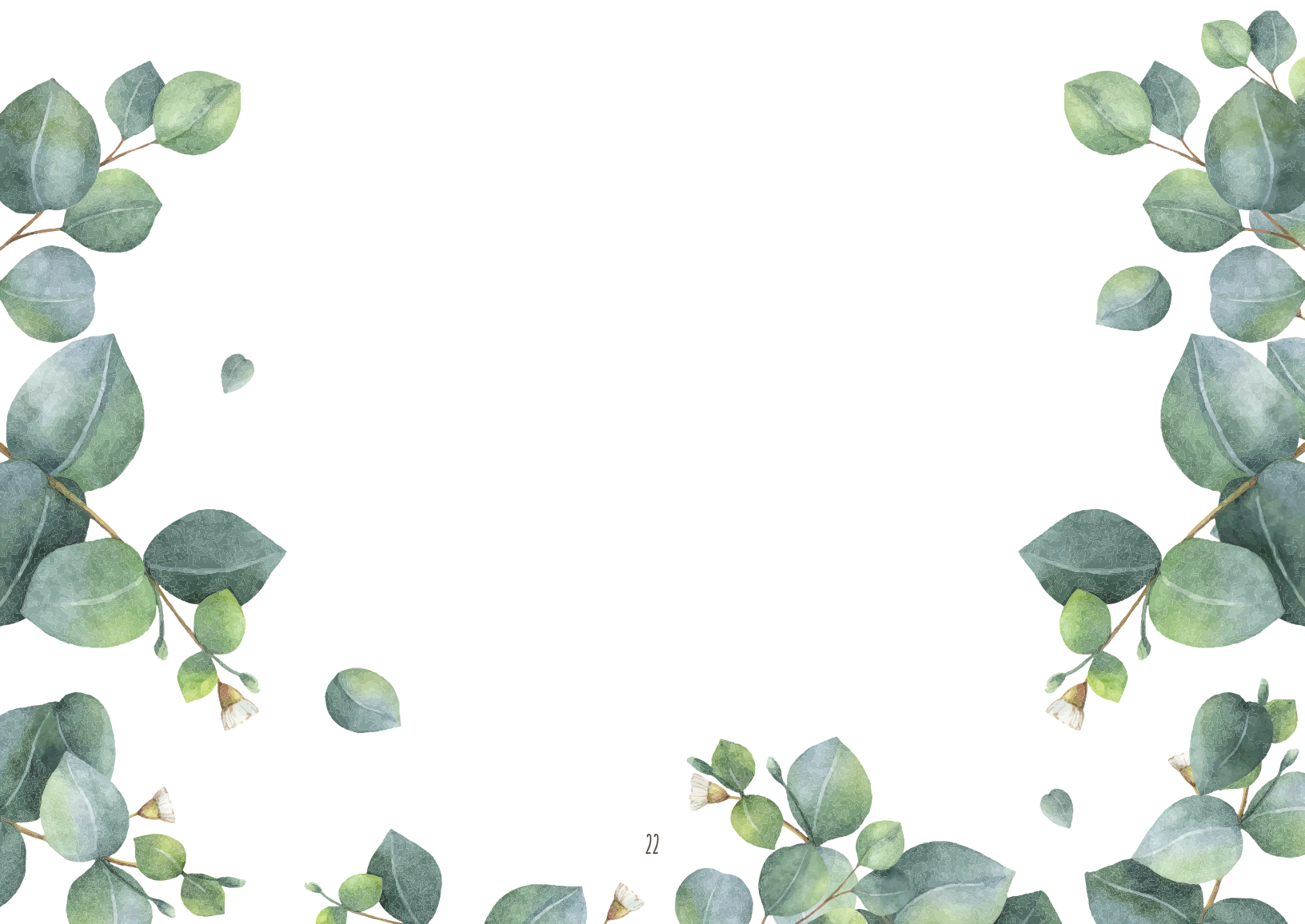
		-	0	+
1.	I have worked to create a peaceful and harmonious spirit in our home, which makes my husband glad to be home with me.			
2.	I know what pleases my husband and I seek to act in accordance with his desires. I don't do things in opposition to him.			
3.	In my mind I focus on what is good about my husband, not what needs to be changed.			
4.	I think of my husband as being smart and capable; I don't question his actions.			
5.	I treat my husband as a responsible adult; I don't tell him what he should do or how he should do something like I would a child.			
6.	When my husband corrects me or gives me a suggestion, I listen and receive it without defending myself or accusing him of something.			
7.	The things I say to my husband encourage him and lift him up, not tear him down and belittle him.			
8.	When in conflict I don't say hurtful or demeaning things.			

If you would be able to accept the outcome, you might have your husband fill out the chart for you.



My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:



SESSION 4

DOING GOOD TO YOUR HUSBAND



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER BRINGS HER HUSBAND GOOD

Proverbs 31:12

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

1. How does a wife bring her husband good?

By being submitted to God's purpose and plan. By fulfilling her role with a right attitude and making life better for him. By building him up and respecting and loving him the way she has been called to. Thinking right thoughts about him.

2. What does "all the days of her life" mean?

Every day, whether she feels like it or not. As long as she lives.

3. What do the days when we don't bring our husbands good show about us?

What is hidden in our heart and needs to be uncovered and dealt with.

4. What is the only way a woman can bring her husband good all the days of her life?

By following God's way, putting her faith in and being connected to Christ. To remain connected she must be uncovering and repenting from her own sin. She must believe and love the truth and obey what is right. If you maintain a connection to Christ, right behavior will follow.

LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

Romans 13:8-10

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

1. What is a debt?

Something that is rightly owed to or due others, an obligation.

2. What is our debt to others? (vs. 8)

To love them in the way God has called us to.

3. What is the law that verses 8 and 10 refer to?

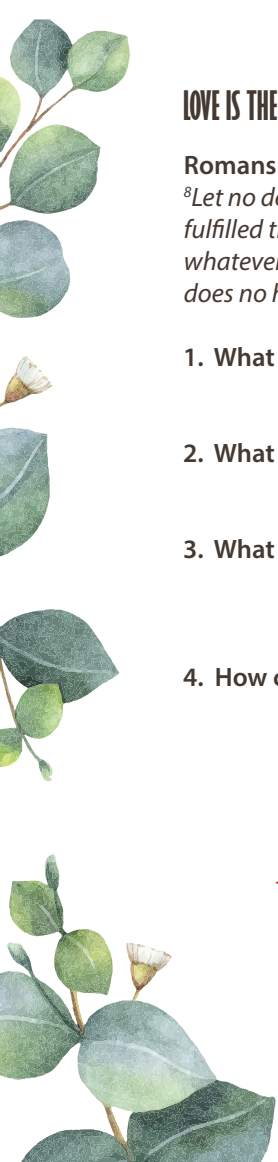
God's commandments on how we are to relate to him and others, our moral and social responsibilities. The boundaries that keep us and others safe and bring benefit to us.

4. How can the commandments as to how we are to treat others be summed up? (vs. 9)

To love your neighbor as yourself.

What does that mean?

Do for them what you would do for yourself. Treat others the way you want to be treated; extend grace to them like you do to yourself. Want their success or benefit as much as you want your own. You care just as much that their mortgage is paid as you do yours.



5. Why is love the fulfillment of the law?

Because love will always treat others correctly and do what is right. It is the sacrificing of self for the good of others. God gave us his law because he loves us and wants it to go well for us. He sacrificed his Son so that we would be able to live according to the law. When we're abiding with Jesus we will always do what is right.

6. What does that mean in terms of how you treat your husband?

Love does what is of the most benefit to another person; it doesn't put self into the equation. If you love your husband, you will look to his interests and do for him what you would do for yourself. You would treat him the way you want to be treated. You would focus on whether you are doing what is right, not on what he is doing.

Remember: You can't love your husband the way God calls you to on your own. You can only love him the way you should through surrendering to Jesus and abiding in his love.

LOVE NEVER FAILS

1 Corinthians 13:1-9

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

1. Looking at 1 Corinthians 13, how do you know love is an action rather than a feeling?

All the words describing love are something we do, not feel. They are ways we can choose to respond, whether we feel anything or not. The action is not dependent upon a feeling. It is a choice of obedience, dependent upon recognition of God's love and how he loves us.

2. How does love respond to other people? (vs. 4)

With patience, kindness and humility

3. What doesn't love do when it is hurt in some way? (vs. 5-6)

It doesn't get angry. It keeps no record of wrongs. It doesn't repay evil for evil.

4. What does love do when things don't go its way? (vs. 7)

Always hopes and perseveres. It never gives up.

5. What will love never do? (vs. 8)

It will never fail; it will always do what is right. It's unconditional; it doesn't depend on what the other person does or doesn't do for us.



6. What does each word or phrase that describes love mean?

- Love is patient
Love is longsuffering; it has the capacity to put up with pain, troubles or difficulties without complaint or ill temper over a long period of time. It takes all things in stride and carries on in the midst of difficulty. It doesn't get exasperated. It waits on God to make things right. Doesn't expect things to be different.
- Love is kind
Love is moral goodness expressed in acts of friendship. It is sympathetic, helpful, thoughtful and gentle, in speech and actions, and consistently follows the Golden Rule. It is considerate of the needs of others. It is without inclination to hurt or harm others and treats others as if they are valuable.
- Love is not envious
Love is content and grateful for what it has without wanting what has been given to another. It is satisfied with the provision and position God has given. It is glad for others for what they have. Doesn't have expectations that should have more.
- Love is not proud
Love is humble in heart. It doesn't look down on others. Love sees self as a sinner in need of mercy. It does not have elevated view of self and does not focus on personal accomplishment or ability or what it can do better than others. It doesn't compare own strengths to the weaknesses of others. Doesn't self promote.
- Love is not boastful
Love is humble in speech; it doesn't say anything that elevates self or puts another in a lower position. Love doesn't think of self as better than others since thoughts will come out in speech. Love doesn't say things that will separate itself from others. It doesn't draw attention to self and doesn't need to take credit for successes.
- Love is not rude
Love is respectful, gracious, and is always polite. It shows proper respect in thought, words, tones, and looks. Love doesn't make snide remarks or put others down in any way. It treats all people as persons of value. It is not offensive.
- Love is not self-seeking
Love does not focus on having own needs met. Love seeks after God and his purposes and trusts him to meet its needs. Love is not personally ambitious. It isn't grabbing for power. It puts needs of others before own.
- Love is not easily angered
Love responds correctly regardless of provocation. It does not let what others do affect its actions or emotions. It is self-controlled; it turns away wrath with gentleness. Love lets go of expectations. It lives at peace with others. It does not easily take offense.
- Love keeps no record of wrongs
Love forgives when wronged and does not think about the transgression or bring it up again. It does not harbor bitterness when wronged or hold onto grudges. It lets go of offense and doesn't dwell on past issues.

- Love does not delight in evil
Love does not secretly rejoice when another "gets his just dues". It doesn't gloat or gossip. Love grieves over own sin. It genuinely wants what is best for others. It prays for enemies. It doesn't justify own sin. It doesn't enjoy seeing others fail.
- Love rejoices with the truth
Love delights in seeing God's word at work and his purposes come to pass. Love wants to know the truth about itself so it receives conviction and correction well. Love desires to see things in light of God's truth. Love speaks the truth in love.
- Love always protects
Love maintains the dignity of others and keeps them from harm. It does not say or do anything that would tear another down. It stands up for others when they are under attack. It doesn't engage in gossip. Doesn't have to prove itself right. Can let things go.
- Love always trusts
Love is not suspicious or doubting. It assumes the best about others. Love believes God is who he says he is and believes his word. Love surrenders control and knows that all things will work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.
- Love always hopes
Love keeps an eternal perspective; it doesn't focus on circumstances but looks beyond them. Love doesn't give into despair or depression. It knows that God will accomplish what he says he will. Love sets its heart and mind on God and the things above.
- Love always perseveres
Love is faithful, forbearing, and doesn't give up when facing difficulty. Love keeps going along God's path even under opposition or without seeing results or promises fulfilled. Love puts one foot after the other and carries on.

Remember: We can't consistently love in a biblical way apart from a relationship with and a connection to Christ. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

TRUE LOVE IS SACRIFICIAL

1 John 4:7-12

⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1. How do we understand the true meaning of what love is? (vs. 9-10)
God has shown us through his Son.

2. What is the essence of God's love? (vs.10)

The sacrificial giving of his Son for unworthy sinners.

3. What is the difference between fond affection and true love?

Affection is a warm feeling towards someone that can come and go. True love is a willingness to sacrifice yourself for another regardless of whether or not you feel affection or think they are worthy.

4. How is God's love made complete in us? (vs. 11-12)

Through our loving others. We don't experience the fullness of God's love in us until it flows out of us by our sacrificially giving to others. In order to be complete it has to be given out.



Illustration: The difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea is often used to illustrate this point. The Sea of Galilee is full of life and vitality while in the Dead Sea nothing can live. The Jordan River flows into both seas but it doesn't flow out of the Dead Sea like it does the Sea of Galilee. In the Dead Sea the water just sits there and evaporates leaving behind salt and chemicals that inhibit life, while the water in the Sea of Galilee remains fresh because it flows both in and out.

5. What is the world's view of love?

A powerful emotion felt for another expressing itself in a deep desire, lust. It is self-focused. How I feel is the focus or what the other does for me. It can also be not challenging another's beliefs or behaviors. "I love my child too much to discipline him."

6. How does the biblical view of love differ from the world's view?

Love is not something we feel but a way we choose to relate to someone else and act towards them. Love comes from God and flows through me and it is made complete as it comes out of me. (I am a channel not a recipient.) It is nice if I have feelings of affection, but feelings are not what determine whether or not I act in love.

7. Why is it important to hold to a biblical view of love?

We can do what is right and show love regardless of our feelings. Our love won't be fickle or changing. We recognize that our own heart needs to be dealt with if we don't feel or can't show love. The flesh tends to align with the world's definition of love.

Remember: Love does what will benefit others, what it is that they really need. The essence of God's love is the sacrificial, selfless giving of his Son. His love is made complete in us as we give ourselves sacrificially and selflessly to one another. We are to be a channel for God's love and let it flow into us and through us to others. You can substitute the words "sacrificial, selfless giving" for "love" in reading 1 John 4:7-12 and think about how that impacts the meaning of love.

The purpose of marriage: The purpose of marriage isn't to have our needs met but to bring glory and honor to God through the marriage relationship. We do that by loving one another sacrificially and in doing so reflect the love of Christ to the world. When we seek and trust in God, he will meet our needs.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Insert your name every place in the passage from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 where it says or refers to the word “love” and reflect on how true the statement is.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

On the chart below, rate the degree to which you demonstrate each characteristic of love toward your husband, children, and others.

– very little 0 some + a lot

In evaluating each characteristic say, “I am ___ with ___.”

Example: “I am patient with my husband.”

Characteristic	Husband	Children	Others
Patient			
Kind			
Content			
Humble			
Respectful			
Self-sacrificing			
Self-controlled			
Forgiving			
Godly			
Protective			
Trusting			
Hopeful			
Faithful/forbearing			

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:

SESSION 5

ACTING IN TRUE LOVE



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER REFLECTS CHRIST

Colossians 3:12-14

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1. What is the key to bringing your husband good?

To love him as Christ loves me with kindness and forgiveness, always wanting the best for him and not wanting to harm him in anyway. Giving up self-interest for his benefit.

2. Remembering 1 John 4:20 from the last lesson, what is the essence of Christ's love?

The sacrificial giving of his life for the forgiveness of our sin.

3. Why is forgiveness an essential part of love?

It is an extension of Christ's grace, an action of returning good for evil. It enables a relationship to thrive and endure. It protects the one who has been harmed from becoming bitter. Like Christ's forgiveness of us, forgiveness keeps no record of wrongs. It accepts the person for who he is.

Proverbs 17:9

⁹Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

Remember: Choosing to respond in submission and love can make your relationship work whether or not your husband chooses to do what is right. Living by biblical principles always blesses and protects us spiritually, regardless of what others are doing.

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER FOCUSES ON THE GOOD

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

1. What does focusing on the good things about your husband do for your marriage?

It causes you to like him more and makes you more desirous of pleasing him. It creates respect. It creates a better atmosphere in your home, makes life more harmonious, and makes you a blessing to him.

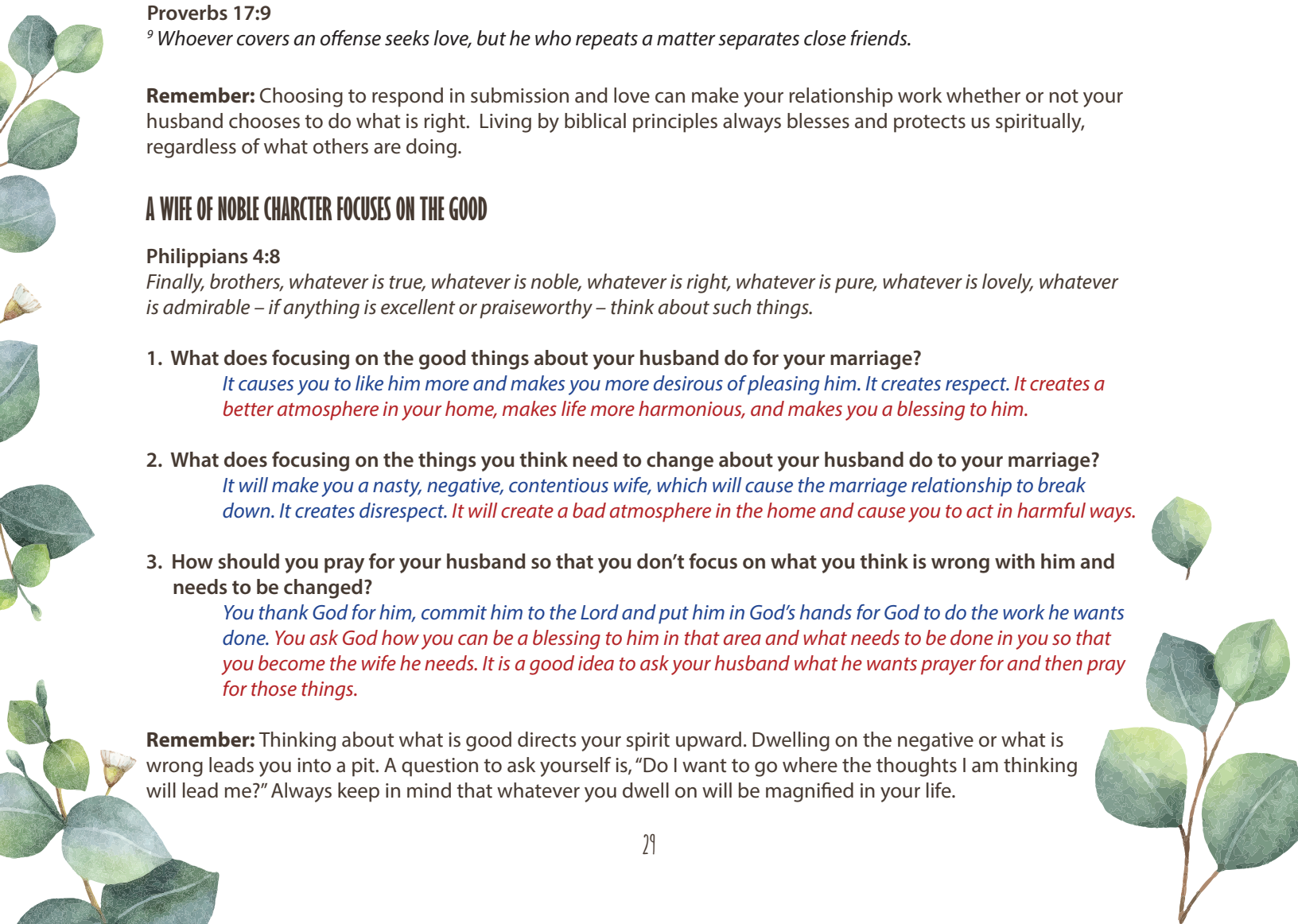
2. What does focusing on the things you think need to change about your husband do to your marriage?

It will make you a nasty, negative, contentious wife, which will cause the marriage relationship to break down. It creates disrespect. It will create a bad atmosphere in the home and cause you to act in harmful ways.

3. How should you pray for your husband so that you don't focus on what you think is wrong with him and needs to be changed?

You thank God for him, commit him to the Lord and put him in God's hands for God to do the work he wants done. You ask God how you can be a blessing to him in that area and what needs to be done in you so that you become the wife he needs. It is a good idea to ask your husband what he wants prayer for and then pray for those things.

Remember: Thinking about what is good directs your spirit upward. Dwelling on the negative or what is wrong leads you into a pit. A question to ask yourself is, "Do I want to go where the thoughts I am thinking will lead me?" Always keep in mind that whatever you dwell on will be magnified in your life.





A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER WANTS TO PLEASE HER HUSBAND

1 Corinthians 7:34

An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world – how she can please her husband.

1. What pleases a husband?

Knowing that his wife is there for him, that she delights in him, desires and respects him. She has a concern for his desires and what pleases him. A woman wants to be loved, a man wants to be desired and respected. There is no pat answer as all men are different.

2. Why should a wife engage in flirtatious behavior with her husband?

It makes him feel like his wife desires and values him as a man and that she is attracted to him. If she doesn't do it, other women will.

3. What does flirting look like?

It is behavior that is engaged, interested in, and intently focused on the other person.

- Her attention is focused on him and not distracted by other things. She isn't on the phone or social media when he is around.*
- She looks at him lovingly with respect, smiles sincerely, touches him, asks questions about his day and what he is thinking about, gives him backhanded compliments.*
- Responds with respect to what he says, doesn't tell him what to do, says things to elevate him. She doesn't interrupt him. She lets him finish a thought.*
- She dresses to please him, takes delight in being with him, laughs at his jokes.*

Remember: It delights a husband if his wife does not treat him like a child, but rather shows him respect and flirts with him as a lover.

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER FULFILLS HER MARITAL DUTY

1 Corinthians 7:3-4

³The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

1. What is a wife's marital duty to her husband?

The consummation of the one flesh marriage relationship, the fulfillment of the sexual union. It is part of her role to satisfy her husband sexually. She does not withhold herself from him.

2. A duty is defined as an obligation of behavior or conduct in relation to others or to God, which has a stronger claim on a person than personal self-interest. Why is fulfilling the sexual union within a marriage called a duty?

It is an act of obedience and love to both God and her husband. It is something a woman is responsible to fulfill whether she feels like it or not. It makes for a more satisfying experience for both if the desire is there, but regardless of desire, it is a duty that needs to be filled.

3. What happens whenever we fulfill a Christian duty?

We glorify God and are blessed by him. Our love for God is shown by our obedience to his commands.

4. What does it mean that a wife's body belongs to her husband?

She no longer belongs to herself, her body also belongs to her husband. Her body was designed to please her husband. She is not sovereign over her body. If she wanted to be she shouldn't have gotten married. He has the right to ask for it or take pleasure in it when he desires.

5. Why is a wife meeting her husband's sexual needs an important part of bringing him good and showing him love?

Sex is a concrete way to honor him. It is an action of submission and respect. It shows a man that his wife desires him and is willing to give herself to him. Just as a woman has a need to be loved, a man has a need to be desired and respected. It also meets a natural physical need that tends to be stronger in a man than in a woman.

6. What does it say about a woman who avoids or refuses to meet her husband's sexual needs?

She is disobedient to God's design for marriage and is not submitted to God. She does not love sacrificially and is not looking to please her husband. She thinks she is her own sovereign and can do what she wants. She is not believing the truth that giving of herself to her husband will benefit her. She is self-focused and not doing good.

What will be the outcome?

Since it is disobedience to God's commands, there will be a lack of blessing from and closeness to God. Other areas of the marriage will also break down. Satan gets a foothold in the marriage relationship. It creates a power struggle. She hurts the union rather than strengthens it.

7. If a woman has a wrong attitude toward sex, how does she change that?

Through prayer: asking the Spirit to do a work in her, to uncover and deal with wrong ideas, attitudes, hurts and past sins. To focus on what God has called her to be and the benefits of being married. To be willing to talk to her husband about what he sees is wrong and where she needs to change.

Remember: God designed sex to be the consummation of the one flesh relationship and an integral part of marriage. Sex is an important way of doing your husband good and showing him respect. You need to be willing and able to talk with your husband about what would make your intimacy more enjoyable for both him and you.

Conversation starters:

- "Tell me three things that would make our intimacy more enjoyable for you."
- "I desire for this area of our life to be as good as it can be. Would it be okay if I tell you some of the things that would help me?" Use "I" statements, "I feel like being intimate with you when you ..."

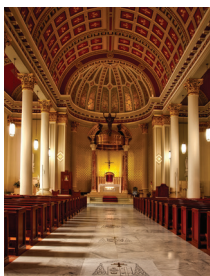


Illustration: At one retreat a woman shared her story. When her husband cleaned the kitchen, something he liked to do, he did it really well. She had told her husband that a sparkling kitchen was something that put her in the mood for intimacy. Once when she was at a meeting she received a picture and text, "The kitchen is sparkling." She texted back, "I'll be home soon," adding a winking smiley face.



PERSONAL EVALUATION

Guarding your thinking and responding to your husband sexually is a tangible way of showing him respect and doing him good. A husband feels honored and respected when his wife wants to please him sexually. Rate the statements below to the degree they generally characterize the way you think of and relate to your husband.

The symbols mean:

- (minus sign)	hardly at all
0 (zero)	some but not a lot
+ (plus sign)	a lot.

Personal Characteristics of Acting In Love

		-	0	+
1.	I respond with forgiveness when I feel I have been wronged.			
2.	I spend time each day thinking about what I can do that will be of benefit to my husband and will honor him.			
3.	I enthusiastically welcome my husband home each night and give him attention.			
4.	I focus my mind on the good my husband does, not his shortcomings.			
5.	I don't compare my husband to other men.			
6.	I flirt with my husband to let him know that I find him desirable.			
7.	I think about what I can do to please my husband sexually.			
8.	I often initiate intimacy with my husband.			
9.	I hardly ever refuse to have sex when my husband desires it.			
10.	I pray that God would enable me to bring delight to my husband.			

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:

PERSONAL ACTION

PUTTING ON LOVE



Paul says in Ephesians 4:22-24, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." Christ's love frees us from our old self to be able to put on the new self.

Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 5:1-2, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Christ has made the love of the Father known to us so that he himself might dwell in us, and his love flow out of us.

Read the scriptures that follow and write out how you will specifically separate from your old nature and put on love towards your husband as you submit to Christ and depend on his Spirit to work in you. Pray for insight and take your time doing this.

1. Put on patience – Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

I will separate from...

Pushing for my own way, trying to be in control and making things happen, nagging, complaining, harsh words, personal expectations.

I will show love by...

By waiting patiently for the Lord to work, trusting God's plan, bearing whatever burden I am called to, giving all things to God in prayer.

2. Put on kindness – Ephesians 4:31-32

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

I will separate from...

Judgment, doing or saying anything hurtful or demeaning, arrogant thoughts of self, rudeness

I will show love by...

Being humble, gentle, compassionate and loving sacrificially, speaking truth with mercy. Acting in a thoughtful manner. Forgiving whatever wrong has been done to me

3. Put on contentment – Philippians 2:14-15

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.

I will separate from...

Focusing on what is wrong or what I don't like, lies, wrong thinking, expectations that things should be different, complaining

I will show love by...

Looking to what I can be thankful for, accepting where I am as God's will and focusing on the good, keeping a grateful, positive attitude.





4. Put on humility – Romans 12:3

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

I will separate from...

Thinking I know more or am smarter than my husband, seeing myself as an authority over my husband.

I will show love by...

Not putting self above him, not challenging him, letting things go, thinking well of him, recognizing own weaknesses, seeking conviction of my own sin.

5. Put on respect – Ephesians 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

I will separate from...

Disrespectful or unwholesome thoughts, tones, words, commenting unnecessarily on things.

I will show love by...

Edifying him by what I say, using respectful words and tones, examining my thoughts, being slow to speak, seeking to bless and benefit by my words.

6. Put on self-sacrifice – 1 Corinthians 10:24

Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

I will separate from...

Expecting him to meet my needs, seeking my own good, withholding myself from him physically, expecting appreciation for what I do.

I will show love by...

Putting his interests above mine, desiring to meet his needs, doing what is needed for his good, giving myself more to Christ.

7. Put on self-control – Galatians 5:24

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

I will separate from...

Any thinking or behavior that could hurt my marriage, evil desires, self-gratification, returning evil for evil, responding in anger or malice.

I will show love by...

Putting on the new nature and following the Spirit, being connected to and abiding in Christ, not responding to provocation. By returning good for evil and doing what is needed to live in peace.



8. Put on forgiveness – Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

I will separate from...

Bitterness, holding on to any wrong, hyperbole, saying, "I told you so." Judging the actions of others, taking offense.

I will show love by...

Remembering my need for forgiveness, forgiving and not bringing it up again, not being easily offended, being gracious to others, overlooking transgressions.

9. Put on godliness – 1 Peter 3:3-4

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

I will separate from...

Vanity, pride, focusing on outward physical appearance, having arrogant thoughts of self.

I will show love by...

Growing in the Lord, giving self to God, uncovering my own sin and allowing God to work in me, not comparing self to others, being gentle and quiet and focusing on internal character development.

10. Put on protectiveness – Proverbs 31:12

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

I will separate from...

Saying anything that would tear him down or dishonor him in the eyes of others, thinking bad thoughts, being harsh, engaging in coarse joking, nit picking or ridiculing him in any way.

I will show love by...

Protecting his reputation and bringing him honor, thinking right thoughts, edifying him, saying right things. Not saying anything that I wouldn't say in his presence. Praying for him.

11. Put on trust – Isaiah 31:1

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.

I will separate from...

Thinking I can do anything, looking to the world's ways, putting faith in wrong things, not trusting in God.

I will show love by...

Putting my faith in Christ to do whatever work needs to be done in me and in my husband, letting God's will unfold.

12. Put on hope – Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

I will separate from...

Discouragement, poor me attitude, focusing on circumstances, having expectations.

I will show love by...

Keeping an eternal perspective, waiting on God, remembering God's promises.

13. Put on faithfulness/forbearance – Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

I will separate from...

Complaining, walking in unbelief, focusing on negative.

I will show love by...

Giving to God whatever needs to be done, being steadfast in dedication to God, praying, not holding expectations, doing what's right regardless of others.

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:

RELATING RIGHTLY POST LOG

One important way that we continue to grow in Christ is by sharing the truth we are learning and living by with others. A reason my marriage continued to get better and better is that I took the women of our church through the study, [More Valuable than Rubies: Becoming a Wife of Noble Character](#), over and over again. Each time I took other women through the study I had to examine myself, uncover my sin, and rely on the Lord to make me right. That is always a beneficial thing to be doing.

I would encourage you to prayerfully consider who God would have you take through this study. You might also want to download the complete study, [More Valuable than Rubies](#), from the Ultimate Outcomes website and work through that material with a partner or group.

My prayer will always be that God would use his truth to do a continual work in you as he continues to do in me. Remember, perfection will only come when we enter heaven. In the meantime, we are in the process of being changed.

Hebrews 10:10 – *He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

