

The Godly Man as A Husband

Fulfilling His Wife's Needs – Being Her Hero

Women are, by nature, followers and responders. They need someone to look up to, admire, and follow. As husbands, we need to be admired. One of the keys to being admired is to so conduct our lives that they are admirable. Women are perhaps more conscious of their appearance than men, while men tend to be more conscious of their character. Both are important. In this study we will be discussing those areas of appearance and character which God deems important in the context not only of our families but also the outside world.

A. Object Of The Lesson

1. To help the men recognize areas of need in their appearance and character.
2. To challenge the men in recognizing the importance of little things.

B. Discussion Questions

1. Which negative attitude is most prevalent in your life?
2. What one part of your appearance do you feel you need to work on most?
3. How did you define integrity? What does integrity have to do with our relationship to our wives?
4. What are some ways that you have practiced integrity this week, or that you have seen it practiced? How would you recognize a man of integrity? How important is integrity to marriage? Is it possible to be too honest? (We have no right to be honest if in being honest we hurt the other party.)
5. What are some of the characteristics of a faithful man? How would you go about developing faithfulness in yourself? (Start with the little things. Luke 16:10)
6. How would you develop faithfulness in your children? (By exhortation and example)
7. In what areas do you need most to improve in the matter of consistency and faithfulness?
8. What are some of the opposites of faithfulness?
 - 1) Doesn't keep his word, over promises himself
 - 2) Always late - over schedules himself
 - 3) Poor on follow - through. I Kings 20:36-40. Over extends himself
 - 4) Not a finisher. Ecclesiastes 7:8, Berkley. Not selective in starting projects
 - 5) Undependable. Takes a lot of reminding and check up. Doesn't count the cost.
 - 6) Blows hot and cold
 - 7) Double-minded
 - 8) Bails out when the going gets a little rough. Proverbs 25:19
 - 9) Disloyal

(Teacher, to help with the section on emotional maturity, I have included an article which is now out of print by Dr. Bob Munger. It is entitled “The Mastery of Moods” and you will find it at the end of this chapter. Psalm 42 in the Living Bible would be good to meditate on also.)

9. How would you define emotional stability and maturity?

10. Describe someone you think is stable and mature emotionally. (Galatians 5:22,23)

11. What negative emotions do you find most difficult to handle? What do you think is the key to handling them properly?

12. When you men are depressed or down in the dumps, what do you find is the best remedy or solution? (Sometimes just good physical exercise can do wonders, sometimes one needs a good time alone with the Lord, sometimes doing something for someone else - getting your mind off yourself, sometimes getting a good rest, etc. Knowing the cause of depression whether it is physical, spiritual, mental, or emotional - helps in determining the remedy. For instance, if you are exhausted from a long period of uninterrupted labor, a good night's sleep - or getting away for a rest, will do wonders to lift the spirits. If one is depressed from self-pity, feeling sorry for oneself, etc. then the best way to lift the spirits is to do something for someone else. Do something to minister to the needs of another instead of self!)

13. Look at Romans 8:28-39. What do you find here that would help you overcome depression? (Teacher, you might want to suggest the following application of Romans 8:28 to help them anytime they are discouraged, depressed, down in the dumps - or just need to have their spirits lifted and get their eyes off “poor me!”)

a. Take a blank sheet of paper and write out the paraphrase of Romans 8:28 as it is given in the Living Bible: “And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God, and if we are fitting into His plans.” Romans 8:28.

b. Now re-write the phrase - “And we know that all that happens to us” - Then list all your problems, setbacks, defeats, etc. then finish writing the rest of the verse.

c. Now write the phrase again - “And we know that all that happens to us” - This time list all of your victories, accomplishments and progress, etc. - and then complete the verse.

d. Spend time meditating on this and thanking God for what He's shown you.

14. When does depression or “feeling low” most often hit you? (It is good to be alert to possible times depression is likely to hit us: For instance, before a great victory, during long period of hard, uninterrupted labor, or in the hour of success or the hour of victory. (Example: I Kings 18:36-46 tells of tremendous victories. Then in I Kings 19:1-8 we see Elijah in a state of depression - physically overwrought; he thought he just couldn't take any more). Why does it come after an hour of success? (Pride and letting down after driving so hard, relaxing).

15. What is worry? How does it differ from concern? (Teacher, compare the definitions for these two words in the dictionary. The following statistics about worry that might be of interest to the class: Psychiatrists say 70 % of what we worry about never happens. 22 % is not nearly as bad as we thought it would be when it gets to us. Only 8 % are valid worries. So ... our worrying is 92 % inefficient!)

16. What are we prone to be afraid of? (The unknown, the uncertain, the future, failure, etc.) What is the source of fear? (Review and emphasize II Timothy 1:7)

C. Suggestions For Conclusion

1. You might want to share the following 10 Commandments for Husbands with the group.

1. Treat your wife with strength and gentleness.
2. Give ample praise and reassurance.
3. Define areas of responsibility and stick to them.
4. Avoid criticism.
5. Remember the importance of little things.
6. Give her a sense of security.
7. Recognize the need for togetherness.
8. Recognize the validity of her moods.
9. Cooperate with her in every effort to improve your marriage.
10. Discover her particular individual needs and try to meet them.

2. Since you have been walking with Christ, in which areas do you think you have made the biggest change? e.g. in your appearance? your character? (integrity? consistency? faithfulness? emotional stability and maturity?)

3. In which areas do you see your greatest need for improvement? (Ask the class to write these down as each shares. And ask each one to pray for this area of need for each of the others during the class during the coming week.)

D. Additional Scriptures

Numbers 23:19; Proverbs 10:26; Proverbs 25:19; James 1:17; Proverbs 11:3; Psalm 12:1; Psalm 78:71,72; II Timothy 2:2; Luke 16:10

E. Possible Projects

1. Ask your wife to make a list of the projects around the house which you have promised to do and have not yet completed. Do them this week.

F. Extra Helps

Audio BSU 65 - Honesty

Audio 1124 - Attitudes Toward Circumstances

Audio 118 - Discouragement and Depression

Audio 933 - God's Answer for Discouragement for Disappointment

Audio 310 - Emotional Conflicts versus Physical Health.

The Mastery Of Moods *by Dr. Robert Boyd Munger*

“... to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ... “ Isaiah 61:3

We are all subject to moods, some people more than others. Temperaments vary and dispositions differ, but all of us know recurring periods of depression. One may be by disposition melancholic and easily plunged into pessimism. Another may be irritable, jumpy, a constant worrier. Yet another person may be easy-going and naturally optimistic. I remember a friend once saying to me, “I never get discouraged. I am always optimistic about everything.” I said to myself, “You are the exception to the rule.” Most of us have our moments of discouragement and I confess that there have been times in my experience when I have known dark purple depression.

I remember particularly the teen-age years of exquisite suffering! Not long ago I came across an old diary which I had begun to keep in my sophomore year at the University - a really difficult year under any circumstances. The diary had been given to me as a Christmas gift and I kept it for about four weeks, which is longer than I have ever kept any diary. As I perused the pages I was impressed by the complete pessimism and skepticism that was mine in those days. I was critical of everything and everybody and, most of all, myself. I had no reason to be depressed. I had everything a young man could want and yet I knew depression. Thank God the “dark night of the soul” did not last and I am grateful that there came the “light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

I have learned through the years, however, that moods will return. They may not have the same intensity or duration. They may not have the same cause but they will come, and if we do not know how to handle them or how to rely upon the grace of God, they can easily rob us of peace and joy.

Perhaps you too have a battle with your moods. Old Giant Despair comes around and throws you into Doubter's Castle. Discouragement takes you by the scruff of the neck and shakes you until your bones rattle. Fear lays its icy hand upon you until you cower in a corner. A feeling of failure and guilt puts you in some dark cell without a ray of light. Well, let us consider some sound steps in the mastery of our moods.

First, do not take your feelings too seriously. Feelings are not fundamental in life. Life is to be grounded upon fact - the sound, solid unchangeable fact of God in Christ. Life is to be anchored and oriented there. Moods and emotions come and go. The art of living is to proceed calmly, faithfully, purposefully in the light of God, no matter how you feel. Sometimes our feelings move along with us and are an encouragement, and sometimes they drag their feet and are a real discouragement. But whatever our feelings or moods, they are not fundamental. The fundamentals are the facts, and the primary facts are the way God feels about you and what He has done for you.

A student, whose term paper was due, wrote a note to his professor which read, “Dear Sir, I just did not feel up to that kind of creative effort this week.” The professor called him to his office and said, “Young man, don't you know that most of the real work in this world is done by people who don't feel like doing it?” Don't take your feelings too seriously. They are incidental, not fundamental.

Don't take yourself too seriously. There are far greater issues in this old world than your happiness and your peace of mind. I think this needs to be said today because there is so much being printed on the subject of happiness and peace of mind. We get the idea that these are the big things in life. They are important but they are not of prime importance. What is the primary purpose of your being here? Why have you been brought into existence? Why did God give Himself in Jesus Christ for your redemption at such infinite cost, and if you are a believer, why has God given you new life in Him? God has done this to bring you to Himself forever. When you understand this fact you begin to place

your little ideas in the light of God's eternity. You begin to understand what lies behind your existence and what lies behind the grace of God which has come to you in Christ. Life starts to balance up.

Let's start with the facts. Let us attach our faith and confidence to the unchangeable fact of God in Christ our Lord and what He has done for us, and we will find that feeling will tag along. Let's not reverse the order and think that the important thing is feeling, then faith and fact. Our feelings do not count. As a matter of fact the strength of our faith doesn't count. What really counts is our dependence upon God's faithfulness to us in Christ our Lord. Then come with your variable moods to God. Tell Him exactly how you feel. Say, "I am depressed. I am discouraged. I have no joy. I have no love. But Lord, you want me even if I do not want myself. You place value upon me even if I don't place value upon myself. In the Name of Jesus Christ, I put myself in your hands and wait on Thee. Give me the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness!"

Moods arise from different sources. Circumstances, for example, may discourage and disturb us. An advancement is denied you in your place of business. You lose your job or have financial reverses and know discouragement. A friend misrepresents the truth or says something critical about you and you feel it keenly. Sickness lays you aside. A certain young lady in whom you are interested says "No," and you are depressed. A devastating blow may suddenly strike you. All right, that happens to all of us. The Gospels record that even Jesus Christ knew discouragement, for on His way into the Garden of Gethsemane when the specter of the cross was before Him, He said, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." He felt it. His perfect humanity is manifested not in His insensibility to discouragement, trouble or suffering, but in the rapidity with which He came back into poise and power and into fellowship with the Father. When He rose from His knees in the Garden of Gethsemane He was on top of circumstances and from that moment on He was undisturbed.

He said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given Thee from above" (John 19:11) . His last words breathed on the cross were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He made clear to us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). By the grace of Jesus Christ, the Christian can take anything that life throws at him and make that circumstance become a stepping stone. Jesus Christ took a cross and made it a throne. He took a crown of thorns and made it a diadem. He took the reed and made it a scepter of risen power. He took death and opened it to eternal life. This same Saviour works with us today and will do the same things for those who trust Him. Get your eyes off circumstances and on to the Saviour. Do not shrink from troubles as adversities but welcome them as opportunities.

Some moods are caused by physical illness. A continued outlay of effort and energy may result in a depletion of strength which subjects us to moods and depressions. Psychologists can chart these recurring depressions and even predict - when they know the nature of the cycle in the patient's personality and the pressure upon him - when they will occur.

The story is told of an ancient king who periodically was subject to black moods and depressions. He called his counselors together and said, "Devise for me some simple motto which I can hang on the wall of my bedroom so that whenever I feel discouraged, I can get a lift of heart from the word." The wise men pondered this for a while and finally they came up with a motto of four words which the king hung on his bedroom wall and which always gave him a lift. The words were "This Too Shall Pass." Many of our moods are the low point of a physical cycle and they will pass of themselves. If you are in the shadows today, go shopping for a swimsuit; you will be in the sunshine before long. The Psalmist said, "Why are thou cast down O my soul and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." That is sound Christian optimism.

Some moods are caused by mental or psychological factors. These moods are difficult to handle. The sciences of psychology and psychiatry have made magnificent contributions to the understanding of ourselves and our emotions. I believe in using these sciences just as I believe in using the science of medicine. These means have been used of God again and again to bring help. I realize that for some strange reason, there are many who fear these modern sciences and feel that it is wrong to take advantage of expert counsel in these fields. It does not mean that you are a failure as a Christian or that you are mentally ill when you seek expert counsel for your emotional confusion. If one were to break a leg, he would call for a doctor to set the broken limb. There are emotional injuries which are just as real and painful as a broken limb and these need to be “set” with a skilled hand. Jesus Christ is the Master Psychologist. Let us turn first to Him. His grace and truth provide the soundest therapy for the mind and the heart. Let us place our case wholly in His hand, and then let us use the professional means He puts at our disposal that we might know the restoration which He offers us.

Some moods are moral and spiritual in their origin. The most destructive and disruptive factors in personality are sin and guilt. Ask any counselor about this. As a minister of the Gospel it is my privilege to counsel with many people about their problems and I have seen lives literally torn to pieces by a sense of guilt. “O, the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked.” The man who carries a sense of sin in his heart, whose selfishness has injured other lives, whose lust and impurity have defiled the soul, whose dishonesty has accumulated a great mass and weight upon his soul, is inwardly torn to pieces and he knows no peace.

Desperation may come to the child of God as well. The one who has known fellowship with Christ, who has known peace, who has received forgiveness can grieve the Holy Spirit through neglect and willfulness. His fellowship with God can be broken temporarily, and in the far country, the prodigal is miserable. But there is recourse for the sinner, the glorious provision of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’ (I John 1:9). When I go to Christ in surrender and lay my guilty life in His hands, when I appeal to the merits of His love and redeeming death I can take from the hand of God the forgiveness of sin and know His peace. This is therapy at the deepest level. Then let us confess to God exactly what we are and how we feel. Let us commit to Him our way and rely upon Him completely.

Let me outline some practical steps on how to get on top of our troubles and master our moods. The first step is a simple one. Take a piece of paper and write down precisely what is bothering you. Fears and discouragement are like balloons. They can be blown up to large and frightening shapes and sizes but they really don't weigh anything. They are just a lot of air. When you write down the specific things that are bothering you, you deflate them. You bring them closer to their size and discover that about half of your fear is groundless.

When Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was in a despondent mood, his wife wrote a letter to him and placed it on his desk. She said, “Dear Oliver, You have lived a long time and have seen many troubles most of which never happened. Some of the griefs and the sharpest you have survived, but what torments of grief you have endured from fears of events which never arrived.” How futile to carry the burden of things that are not there. Put them down in black and white. Look at them and they will deflate before your eyes.

Another suggestion is to decide that you don't want to worry. You say, “That is silly. Nobody wants to worry or be distressed and discouraged.” Wait a minute! Some of you really do. You are indulging your moods. You are cultivating your concerns. You are feeding your fears because this, in a sense, feeds your self-pity. It gives you an opportunity to draw on the sympathy of others and it releases you from certain responsibilities in life. You really hug these things to

your heart. You like them! So, another very helpful step is to decide that you don't want these discouragements and fears. Say to yourself, "I want to be God's man - God's woman. I want to walk in His light, know His poise and joy through Jesus Christ. I choose that instead." You may not believe me but just take my word for it. Look your fears over and see how many of them you want and how many you don't want and get rid of them by renouncing them.

Talk your problems over with a wise friend who knows the ways of God. Principally because of pride it is difficult to talk to another person about one's problems. We do not want anyone to know what kind of person we really are. We do not want anyone to know that we are depressed, blue, despondent, and afraid. So we keep these things locked inside and don't tell anyone about them. They just stay there, festering. But the moment we push aside our foolish pride and tell someone exactly what we are, the light of real objective truth is shed upon the situation.

One summer when we lived out in the country, my four-year-old nephew visited us. The night was warm, and the windows were wide open when he was being tucked in bed by his mother. Outside the window, the crickets were in full orchestration and the little boy from the city who had not heard crickets before said, "What makes that noise?" His Mother replied, "The crickets are making that noise." "What's a cricket?" he asked. Did you ever try to describe a cricket? It's difficult. The little fellow thought something as big as a cow was making all that noise. In spite of every consoling word his fears were not reduced and he spent a bad night. The next day, I managed to find a cricket in the garden and I showed it to him. I said, "This is a cricket. He makes the noise you heard last night by rubbing his hind legs together. That was hard for him to believe too! But when I finally persuaded him that that insignificant little bug was the thing that was making the noise, his fears vanished.

When we take our moods and our feelings out before the eyes of another we see them in their true size. Mushrooms grow in damp, dark corners and they shrivel in the sunshine. Fears and moods grow in damp, dark corners. Move them out into the sunshine and watch them shrink.

Another step is to talk things over with God. This should be the first step. Talk to Him in prayer and let Him speak to you through the Bible. The Psalmist testified "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." How true! When we go to the Bible and let the Spirit of God illuminate its truth, light is brought into the darkness. Again the Psalmist cries, "My soul grieveth unto the dust." What a picture! "My soul grieveth unto the dust. Quicken Thou me according to Thy Word." For he knew that the sure word of truth poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit is life-giving. It quickens us up from the dust. Open the Scripture every morning and every evening. Spend time with God. Surrender yourself to the eternal truth of Christ. Listen to what the Lord is saying to you and then talk to Him in prayer.

Have we trials or temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged.
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Here is a quote from *R. D. Foster's Challenge*: "Your dominant thought determines your present action. You become like unto that which you think upon ... a man is transformed by the renewing of his mind (Romans 12:2). Beware of getting alone with your thoughts ... get alone with God's thoughts. Meditation is thinking aloud in the Presence of the Almighty. Beware of meditating on a problem. Meditate on the Word and Person of God and there you will find the answers to your problems. Beware of the danger of generalizations in reflections . . . better known as daydreaming. Get specific. Get alone and quiet with Him ... there to hear His voice, see His face and feel the touch of His hand upon the reins of your heart. Solitude produces a quality of life that must be standard equipment for any of the Master's men."

Yet another step. Decide what you should do about your situation and do it. Write down what you think God wants you to do about this thing and then do it. About fifty percent of our fears and our moods are dispelled by just seeing them in black and white and another forty percent will go as soon as we begin to do something about them. If you cannot think of anything to do, then find somebody who needs help more than you do and endeavor to do something for him. Sitting around brooding over your misfortunes is a bad way to handle your moods. Get busy. Proceed to do what God indicates in your own mind and heart and help others. Get your eyes on the living, Lord. Think of the word of the Apostle Paul written to Christians who were in real trouble. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God: to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). "If God be for us who can be against us" (Romans 8:31). "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Romans 8:33). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 8:35). "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38,39). If you have trusted Christ as your Savior and committed your life to Him, nothing can separate you from the love of God - not even your fears. Then start praising God for His grace and goodness. Even if it is mechanical or an act of the will, stand before the Lord your God and praise His glorious Name.

Recently I heard a returned missionary from China. What a bright, wonderful witness he had! Prior to World War II he had gone into the interior of China to a lonely, difficult field close to the Tibetan Border. As time went by, difficulties and discouragements pressed upon his heart and mind. A friend happened to visit that area, misunderstood something of the circumstances and communicated some distorted truth which hurt the missionary deeply. In addition, from his slender salary he had taken a little sum regularly and placed it in a savings account in the Bank of Hong Kong, where it had accrued to \$150.00. When the Japanese took over the Bank of Hong Kong, he had nothing. His health broke and he was flown over the Hump to India. As he was being flown out in fever and weakness, he prayed, "Lord God, see that I get into a good hospital." But instead of that he found himself in a third - rate hospital where he had little care. The doctors came to him, told him to prepare to face the end as they could do nothing more to help him.

He said, "As I lay there I was not afraid to die, but I was ashamed to be ushered into the presence of my King, a defeated and discouraged Christian. I prayed that God would meet me. I said, 'Lord, what is the matter?' In my extremity, the words of Scripture began to speak. In everything give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you' 'Rejoice in the Lord and again I say, Rejoice' - words written by one who was in prison for Christ's sake. I had even asked God the meaning of absolute surrender and God taught me in that hospital room that absolute surrender is when I thank Him from my heart for everything. I thanked Him for the difficult years in China. I thanked Him that He had stripped me of all financial resources. I thanked Him for the kind of treatment I had received in the hospital. I thanked Him that I was facing death, and as I was praising God He gave me the "garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." He healed my soul and my body. When my wife came to see me that afternoon, I said 'Go back to the hotel room and get my Keswick hymnal. I'm going to sing the praises of God if it is the last thing I do'."

If you want to exchange the spirit of heaviness for the garment of praise, then put on praise like a garment and thank God for everything.