

# Try It the God's Way



By Rob Pue

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In a recent message, I explained the concept of men being servant leaders in their homes, and to their wives. I explained how most modern marriages are set up for failure right from the start, when both partners expect to give 50% of their effort toward the relationship. A 50-50 situation is most common today, as wives expect their husbands to contribute half of everything and the husband expects the wife to contribute the other half.

By our human reasoning, this sounds like the ideal situation, but as I explained previously, when each partner contributes 50%, that means that each person fails, and I used the analogy of getting a 50% grade on a test in school. If you get 50% on a test, you fail. In marriage, 50% also equals failure, and not just the failure of one, but the failure of both partners, and then the failure of the marriage itself.

I firmly believe that husbands should serve their wives while being the leaders of their homes. I understand this goes contrary to what many Christians have been taught as they cherry-pick Ephesians 5: 22 and 23: *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the Church."* I know there are many professing Christian men out there who love to quote this verse of Scripture as they assert their domination, seeking to be Master of their domain. And they think it's biblical.

Somehow, they miss the part that says, “...as also Christ is head of the Church.” Men, are you treating your wife properly or are you one who thinks “*Wives submit to your own husbands*” means that when you get married, you acquire a slave? Understand, we’re Christians here – not Muslims. In Islam, the wife does, indeed, become her husband’s slave. In Christianity, the husband leads his home by *serving* his wife; attending to her needs, providing for her, protecting her, cherishing her as “more precious than jewels.” As the head of the Church, Christ literally gave His life for His Bride.

Now, many will say, “absolutely... I would readily give up my life for my wife.” Really? Are you doing that now? Are you putting *her* needs, desires and interests ahead of your own? Or are you saving 50% of yourself (your time, your attention, your recreation, your free time, your disposable income) – for *yourself*? So...you’d give up your life for your wife... but will you give up your television time, your fishing and hunting time? Will you give up something you’ve been wanting in favor of blessing your precious wife with something she’s been wanting? Will you give up the rest and relaxation you feel you need and deserve in order to do tasks for your wife that she really hates to do? And one more: are you willing to give up the porn you’ve been viewing? I know, for many of you, that one stung a little bit. But it’s a valid question, and one not talked about in “Christian” circles – probably because just as many professing Christians engage in pornography as do non-Christians; they just do it in secret.

Let’s read on. Ephesians 5:25, “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her.*” As Christians, we’re to live our lives here on this earth in continual sanctification, becoming more like Christ as we mature in our faith each day. So, we’re to be the leaders in our homes, and like Christ, we are to love – we’re to be *servant* leaders...ministers. And if you serve your wife, love her, adore her, cherish her and put her second only to

God Himself in your life, giving not 50% but 100% of your time attention and affection to her, I believe you'll find your wife will not only respect and honor you but willingly submit herself to your needs as well. This is the biblical recipe for a Godly marriage.

Our problem today is that so many are self-centered. We live in a literal toxic environment – from the chemicals and poisons in the air we breathe, to the water we drink and the food we eat. But it's worse than that. Today we live in a *spiritually* toxic environment as well, surrounded by the wicked enticements of self-indulgence and self-interest. It's everywhere we turn, from entertainment and social media to our pop culture at large. We've been brainwashed by the enemy to regard our selves as entitled and deserving of everything. The trouble is, when everyone has this mindset, there's little to no real serving going on, and Christ calls us to be servants of all. He calls us to die to self and instead serve others, especially our dear spouses. Yes, like everything else, Satan has turned God's perfect design and plan to the complete opposite and our worldly lusts and passions have lured us into his trap.

And like everything else, we must seek the guidance of God's Word as we navigate this short life we have in this earthly realm. Again, constant sanctification. Constantly seeking to know and do God's will – and follow His plan. We can't very well do that if we don't even know His will or His plan. But if you study and understand God's Word on a regular, daily basis it becomes very easy and crystal clear how we're to live and how we're to treat and interact with each other.

So many today view their marriages as a curse rather than the greatest blessing in their lives. Men refer to their wives as "the old ball and chain." A burden, ruining all the fun. Wives refer to their husbands as "my old man." Undesirable, fat, lazy and boring. But once upon a time these two were deeply in love. All they could think

about was each other. What in the world happened? "Self" happened, that's what. The honeymoon quickly ended as each partner sought to fulfill their own desires, rather than serve one another as they did when they were "courting." When you do that, the attraction, love and desire you have for one another will obviously reverse itself and of course you'll view your spouse as a burden, baggage, undesirable, fat, lazy and boring. So... how is that "serving yourself" stuff working out now? Don't you see? The Bible is right again! Husbands, love your wives and give yourself up for her! Wives, submit to your husbands as unto the Lord! It's all right there!

But what happens when one spouse is following Christ, becoming more spiritually mature and living their lives in faith, relying on God and revering Him, but the other is not? First of all, choose your mate wisely. I understand the infatuation and passion you feel in the beginning. You may be a strong, faithful Christ-follower, but your beloved may only be a "baby Christian" or may even only express a slight interest in the things of God, so that you'll find them acceptable. You're so "in love," you believe this doesn't really matter that much, because you think once you're married, you'll grow together in the Lord.

That doesn't always happen. In 2nd Corinthians 6, we're warned to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. This is especially important when it comes to marriage. When the honeymoon and the infatuation inevitably ends, you may find yourself in a life-long union with a person who thinks you're crazy because of your deep faith and love for God. You may wait a lifetime for them to come to Christ, even when you're leading by example and selflessly serving them, modeling a true Christ-following lifestyle for them.

You might have a deep desire to pray together, serve God together, follow His commandments together, but your spouse may have zero interest in any of those things. Scripture tells us, however, that we're to stay together. The only

excuse for divorce anywhere in God's Word is in the case of adultery, and this is a worst-case scenario and very grievous to God. In 1 Corinthians 7, we have this: *"If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not leave her. Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is set apart for God by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is set apart for God by the husband."*

1 Peter 3:7 says, *"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."* These verses tell me that even if your spouse is an unbeliever, you should still – steadfastly and consistently – minister to them through servant leadership, because you're heirs *together* of the grace of life. You may not be able to pray together, but you must still pray *for* your unbelieving mate – and do so in faith that their hearts may be opened to the Lord. And men, give honor to your wife under all circumstances. If you don't, Scripture warns that your prayers may be hindered.

And again, when you pray, do so in faith. You may have been the perfect spouse, patient, kind, loving and serving your mate for decades, praying for them to come to Christ and still you haven't seen any fruit from your efforts. I understand this can be extremely frustrating. But if you've been faithful to plant the seed, if you've been faithful to water it and tend to it, then continue to petition God in prayer on your mate's behalf. *"And He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

That's Philippians 1:6, and though it's actually an encouragement from Paul and Timothy to the new believers in Philippi, I believe it's also applicable in the case of an unbelieving spouse. Since you and your mate are no longer two but one flesh when you're married, God's promises are for both

of you. But understand that the work of your spouse's salvation is not yours to do. You are to plant the seed, water it, tend to it, serve it and pray for it. But it is God who will be doing the miracle – not you.

Be encouraged though. I know of several examples where it literally took a lifetime together before an unbelieving spouse came to Christ in repentance and true faith. Sometimes we get the blessing from God of being allowed to see the fruits of our labors. In other cases, the seeds we plant don't bloom until after our time on this earth is up. Hang in there. Do your part. Continue on in faith and confidence in God. Don't let the doubts of the enemy frustrate you, and don't grow weary in well doing.

In conclusion on this topic, many marriages today are in turmoil. Many couples are incredibly unhappy in their marriages. Some are unequally yoked. If you're in a situation like this, just know that it doesn't need to be this way. There is hope. But you must do your part.

Memories are a wonderful gift from God. They teach us to avoid dangers and mistakes we made when we didn't know any better. But our memories can also be a blessing as we recall the deep love and connection we had with our spouses when we were "courting." In your mind, go back to those days, and remember that love. Yes, it was a *feeling* then, an *emotion*. But as we progress together in life, "love" transforms from a mere superficial feeling to intentional actions. If you want that newlywed "spark" back in a wounded and dying relationship, simply do what you did "way back when." You pursued, you served, you gave, you overlooked imperfections and focused on the good things. Do this again. If you're in what you consider a "bad marriage," this can only help. Do so with good and Godly intentions and combine it with fervent prayer – praying with confidence and faith – and He will bless your efforts.

Our lifetimes here are too short to waste time and expend energy on doing life the wrong way. God Himself has laid out the plan for us in His Holy Word, the Bible. Study it, and you will find every answer you're seeking. At the same time, realize that the enemy of our souls, Satan, has brainwashed entire societies and cultures around the world with lies that are the exact opposite of God's perfect plan for us.

It's a spiritual battle we're in. Satan attacks children and families relentlessly, but to do that, he first must get a foot in the door by attacking husbands and wives in their marriages. One of his most effective tools is whispering in our ears that we "deserve better," that we are "entitled" to whatever we want, that we should come first. Jesus said the opposite. He said we must be the servant of all, laying down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and especially within the covenant we made with our spouses in marriage. So, try it God's way. Do the opposite of what Satan has made popular through his clever marketing of self-indulgence. Romans 12:2, *"And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* Don't just read that. Do it. You've seen where doing things your way has gotten you. Isn't it time to try it God's way?

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