

THE GODLY HUSBAND

To be godly means to live according to the same standards and behaviours we would find in God. I believe that to be godly is to reflect God's character in and through our life. To be godly is to be Christlike. Jesus Christ and God are one. A godly life is a Christlike life where we imitate the character of Christ Jesus, our Lord and saviour. A godly man is a Christlike man who can say like the Apostle Paul, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ". Jesus said, "pick up your cross daily and follow me".

Galatians 2:20 gives us the key to truly imitate Christ and live a godly life:

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

What does it take to be a godly husband?

1. Total surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ and the leading of His Spirit

When asking how to be a godly husband, one of the first truths to recognize is that **no one is naturally godly**. Neither men nor women can be everything God wants them to be **in their own strength**. So to be a godly husband requires that we **first surrender our lives completely to the lordship of Jesus Christ** (it is no longer I who live) and then by His Spirit and not in our own strength, endeavor to live a life that displays His character in our relationship with our spouse.

2. Total surrender to our spouse

In marriage, this means that a husband and wife are no longer their own bosses. Each has **willingly surrendered to the other the right to do whatever they want whenever they want**.

Mark 10:8 (NKJV) and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.

The moment we get married, we are no longer two individuals, but we become one flesh.

Corinthians 7:4 (NKJV) The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the **husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does**.

The godly husband understands that he can no longer just do as he pleases. He doesn't have the authority to do so because his wife has authority. Just as a woman must submit to her husband, so, this verse would imply that a man should submit to his wife too.

Discuss: It's easy enough to accept that being a godly husband requires total submission to Jesus, but can we accept that we also need to be in submission to our wife?

A godly husband is not about "me, myself and I".

Philippians 2:3-4 lays a foundation for all godly relationships, including marriage: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

This can be particularly hard for men. It may never cross a man's mind that his wife is not as passionate as he is about spending the weekend at the rugby game or fishing at the dam. But this passage instructs us to intentionally consider the feelings and ideas of others, rather than assume that they think as we do.

Let us ask ourselves where we are putting our own hobbies, sports and passions ahead of our wife. Are we possibly treating our wife simply as an object for our personal pleasure? Are we putting her first, considering she has feelings and needs and wants too and ensuring that we are addressing those areas in love.

A godly husband honours his wife

First Peter 3:7 says, "Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

- "Weaker vessel" does not imply inferiority, since the verse continues by stating that a woman is a co-heir with her husband.
- "Weaker" means that a woman is not to be treated as "one of the guys."
- She is created differently, in both body and spirit.
- "Understanding" is key. A husband must study his wife, learn who she is, and make choices that highlight her strengths and beauty. My wife often says "a woman is an enigma", that means they are not easily understood, but with patience and love, we can begin to find out what really makes our wife tick and this will result in a happy wife and a happy life.
- Physical confrontation, verbal bullying, and emotional neglect have no place in a Christian marriage.
- To live with her in an understanding way means that a wise husband controls his own needs and desires so that hers are met.
- He does not belittle her, minimize her contributions to the family, or expect her to do what God has given him to do.
- As the husband learns to honour his wife in this manner, he will find his prayer life to be much more effective.

A godly husband imitates Christ's relationship with the church in his relationship with his wife.

If we are going to be godly and imitate Christ, we need to do for our wife what Christ did for the church.

Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

- Husbands are to show sacrificial, unconditional love for their wives in the same way that Jesus loves us, His bride, even when we are unruly, disobedient, and unlovable.
- Verse 28 goes on to say, "Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." Men usually have no problem loving their own bodies. Sexual fulfillment, muscular prowess, and other physical needs are often top priorities. God is instructing husbands to give their wives the same priority that they give those physical needs.
- Jesus willingly subjected His own body to abuse, humiliation, and need for the sake of His bride, the church. That is the model this Scripture gives for husbands to follow.

A godly man leads his wife in love.

Ephesians 5:23-25 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Christian wives desire godly leadership, not dictatorship. However, a man cannot lead where he has not been.

- A leader goes first, forging the way, wrestling through spiritual issues and then presenting God's instruction to his family.
- An ongoing personal relationship with Jesus is crucial in order to lead a family spiritually.
- God holds men responsible for the spiritual and physical well-being of their families.
- The husband must lead by example in church attendance, Bible reading, prayer, and spiritual disciplines. It is difficult for a Christian wife to respect her husband in other areas when he has not been consistent in leading her spiritually.

Both single and married men can benefit from these traits of a godly leader. A leader is:

- First a servant ([Matthew 23:11](#))
- Teachable ([Proverbs 19:20](#))
- Filled with the Holy Spirit ([Acts 6:3](#))
- Enthusiastic about his role ([Ephesians 6:7](#))
- A model of humility and forgiveness ([1 Peter 5:6](#); [Ephesians 4:32](#))
- Loving to those he leads ([Matthew 5:46](#); [John 13:34-35](#))

- Ready to admit his failures and areas where he needs growth ([Philippians 3:12](#))

Here are some questions we can ask ourselves to determine if we are being godly husbands.

1. Does our schedule indicate that our wife is a top priority in time, energy, and focus?
2. Are we dwelling with them with understanding, giving honour to our wife, as to the weaker vessel?
3. Are we taking the initiative to lead our wife spiritually by sharing the things God is teaching us?
4. Are we sensitive to our wife's physical state and sexual needs? They will be different from ours, and a godly husband respects that without pouting or trying to "punish" her or force himself on her.
5. Are we accepting equal responsibility for the children? Even if our wife is better at some aspects of parenting, our children are our responsibility. Your wife needs a partner who willingly shares the load with her.
6. Examine our tone of voice. Have we fallen into a habit of harshness, blame, or subtle disapproval?
7. Do we ever resort to physical or verbal abuse in any form? If you need anger management help, get it.
8. In areas where our wife is weak, are we helping her to grow rather than criticizing or shutting down?
9. Are we being a good listener? Wives need to share their hearts, and we must be the safest place for her to do that.
10. Are we the guardian of her heart, dreams, and self-worth? We cannot be God to her, but we can encourage her to connect with God in such a way that her deepest emotional needs are met in Him.

Men often measure themselves by externals, which are outside their control. Money, fame, physical ability, and power are fleeting and temporary. However, a husband can choose to define success by how well he has followed God's command to cherish his wife and lead his family. A happy wife is a testament to her husband. While he is not responsible for the way his wife responds, every husband can control how well he is following Jesus' model in loving and leading the ones God has entrusted to him. Let us eagerly seek the privilege of being godly husbands, leading and loving our wife as Christ leads and loves the church. This is one of the keys to becoming a godly man.