

Seven Responsibilities
Of A Christian Husband
And Father

A Metaphor

As we look around our homes, we can see that most items within it have a specific purpose. The chair is for sitting. The table is for eating. The window is for light to see, as well as fresh air to breathe.

Just as it is true that “things” in our homes are put there for a reason, so God has placed us men in our families because He has a purpose for us.

A chair with a broken leg is useless in the home. It takes up valuable space, but it cannot be sat upon. Everyone has to be careful of it rather than its offering itself to serve others. People living in the home, and their visitors, all have to be protected from sitting on the broken chair or they will likely hurt themselves by crashing to the floor!

A Challenge

Here’s the challenge: If we do not live in our homes the way God wants us to, then, without meaning to, we will probably do more harm than we realize.

God has given to many men the privilege and responsibility of being both husbands and fathers. Every man began life as a son to his parents. Some remain in that position, alone for their whole lives. That is a special gift given by God to be received with deliberate faith (1 Cor. 7:1,7-8,32,37). But most men will choose a wife, entering into a life-long relationship with his own family.

I met my wife in Australia, on the other side of the world from England where we both grew up. We lived just 38 miles apart in England, although we never met. Thousands of miles away in Australia we were the only two English students at a college. That’s where God brought us together for each other.

Your story will be different from mine. Maybe your parents chose your bride for you, after “negotiating” with her family. Perhaps you married a childhood or

high school sweetheart. In the end, however, you ended up together. You must realize that God makes no mistakes! His call to you today is that you live out your responsibilities towards your wife and your children, using all the help and advice that He offers you in the Bible.

Seven Responsibilities

Let's look at seven responsibilities God gives every husband and father, and see how He will help us meet them.

1. To Lead

A Christian man is to bring leadership to his home and family (Eph. 5:23). As Jesus Christ leads the Church, so men are to lead their families. Jesus' leadership was not self-centered. It involved great strength on His part, to sacrifice Himself in the service of those He deeply loved.

Christianity must come before culture, tradition and parental expectations. Where any of these conflict with God's plan as seen in the Bible, we men must choose to put the Bible's way into practice. To do this, we may have to be man enough to stand alone against community expectations.

God held Adam accountable for sin in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:9-19), even though it was Eve who first took the forbidden fruit. Leadership involves accepting responsibility for the whole family unit.

2. To Love

A Christian man is to nurture love for his wife and family (Eph. 5:25, 28,33). As Jesus Christ continually loves His Church, so men are to always love their families. It does not matter what any family member does, no matter how bad, love is able to hold on to that member while working on the problem.

The principle is 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 for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." We men must choose to copy God in His patient, persistent dealings with wayward people. God has

given us some examples of loving attitudes in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. We cannot control how others behave, but we can, and must, control ourselves.

Christian love is much more than sex, although sex should be a deep expression of love. Sharing in marriage is more than sharing bed and body. Making time to listen to your wife, taking an interest in her practical needs, and being available to do things and go places with your children, are all expressions of your love for them. In fact, your doing these things expresses your love for God as well as your family.

3. To Be Loyal

A Christian man is to be loyal to his wife (Eph. 5:31). As Jesus Christ stands by His Church through every experience of life, so each man is to do the same with his wife. Loyalty means having and showing lifelong commitment to your partner. By marrying your bride, and by opening yourself up to her, you close yourself off from every other woman!

In Africa, the common cup, left by a water barrel for anyone to use, can spread disease as many people put it to their lips to drink. Basic hygiene says it is much safer for each person to drink from his own cup when possible.

A Christian husband and wife are exclusive to each other. Adam received Eve as a gift from God (Gen. 2:22-23). Christian men must never give to anyone else what God has given them to share only with their wives – their sexuality.

Christianity prohibits polygamy, adultery and pre-marital sex. Standards of society and tribe must be measured against God's standards through the whole of the Bible, and the choice must be made to live God's way.

4. To Look After

A Christian husband is to look after all the needs of his family (Eph. 5:29). As Jesus Christ seeks to supply the material, emotional and spiritual needs of the Church, so a man should do all he can to provide for his family. God told Adam he should work hard (Gen. 3:19). It is not right to be lazy. We should protect our families from hardships we can avoid by earning what we can. We

should try to provide with our own hands food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education for our family. Working is part of our worship of God (Rom. 12:1-2). If any sacrifice has to be made, we should make it ourselves before asking any other family member to join us. We may even have to sacrifice the job we really want, in order to actually do the job God offers us as His provision for our family.

God took something away from the man, in order to bring him his wife. The sacrificed rib (Gen. 2:21-22) was used in the Creator's hand to make the best "thing" ever to come into Adam's life! In God's intended way of life for us, giving is regularly our best way to receive.

5. To Be A Living Example

A Christian father should be a living example to his children (Eph. 6:1,4). As Jesus Christ showed us His Father in heaven, so men should make it easy for their children to know and understand God (Jn. 14:9; Mt. 6:9-13). All children learn by copying. We dads have to present to our kids a life worth copying!

As a young boy plays with a stick, holding it as if it were a gun and pretending to shoot because of what he sees, so I must remember that how I live in front of my children is more influential than what I say to them. Children are confused if they hear one thing yet see another (Prov. 22:6).

God trusts you with being a father to your children. It is an awesome responsibility. God the Father in heaven, will be understood by what your children see in you as their father on earth! Pray and live so that you will show many of your heavenly Father's qualities to your earthly children.

6. To Keep Learning

A Christian husband will be always learning about his wife (1 Pet. 3:7). As Jesus Christ knows all about us, so a man should try to understand his wife (Song 4:1-15).

The more years that go by in my marriage the more I appreciate my wife. The better I get to know her by the things we live through together, the more I realize how thankful I should be to God for His gift of her to me.

Men and women are not only physically different, they are emotionally different too. This does not make one of any more value than the other. But it does mean that men and women require different treatment. What pleases me may not please my wife, so I must learn to bring her pleasure. A word of praise or encouragement can mean as much as a bouquet of flowers. A “Thank you” or a “Well done” from you may make this the best day of the week! She knows you have noticed her and appreciated what she has done.

Christianity always puts self last. You probably love most what you think about most. Little actions you do, and words you say that please your partner, come from your thinking less about yourself and more about her. They are two good habits to cultivate.

7. To Really Live With Your Family

A Christian husband and father spends time living with his wife and family (1 Pet. 3:7). As Jesus Christ promised to be with us always, so a man should invest a lot of quality time with his family. The family is the proving ground for church leaders (1 Tim. 3:5). Even local church activities should strengthen family life, not stretch it to breaking point.

God made the family before He made any other institution of society. We must learn from God’s priority and make our priorities the same as His. Time passes no matter what we are doing. Partners get older. Children grow up. It is not possible to turn back the clock of life. We will only have one today. Let’s make sure we use it wisely and well.

That favorite chair that has been broken deserves to be mended. It can be made useful again. If God has challenged you about your relationship with your wife and children, and your responsibilities in the home, decide now to act on what He has shown you.

If you really want to be what God wants you to be as a Christian husband and father take heart! Your Heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask, and He will give you all the abilities that you need (Mt. 7:11).

Together with God, you can become the father and husband God wants you to be, and yours can become the family God wants you to have.

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