

Love and Respect

God created man and woman different. We can see the differences, we experience the differences and yet, we still tend to love our spouse as *we* want to be loved. In Ephesians 5:33, the Lord says that the husband "*must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*" God knows our differences and tells us what to do to meet the needs of our spouse, but it seems that the Lord has given each spouse a difficult task. Men typically do not naturally know how to care for and nurture their wives and they show love when their wives are *loveable*. Similarly, most women find it difficult to show respect for their husbands. They will show respect when he *earns* respect. God's word doesn't leave room for conditional love or conditional respect. Husbands must love their wives and wives must respect their husbands - both are to be unconditional.

Men are to die to self and love their wives as Christ loved the church - unconditionally and as they need to be loved. This means that they must honor and cherish her, protect her, open up emotionally and *live with her in an understanding way* - that is to learn about her and meet her needs. Wives are to respect their husbands; to appreciate him, uphold him and seek to strengthen him in his leadership role. It is sad to see couples in the vicious circle of trying to get their own needs met while purposefully refusing to meet each other's needs. It doesn't have to be this way. God will empower husbands to love their wives and wives to respect their husbands when they make the decision that they will begin doing those things that will show love and respect. We can start doing this *today!*

The Marriage Minute

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