

A Man's need for Respect:

A woman's guide to
meeting her husband's
needs.

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RESPECT IN MARRIAGE

A Complete Study for Every Married Couple

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SECTION 1

The Mutual Framework — Ephesians 5:21

Theologically, respect in Ephesians 5 does not begin at verse 33. It begins at verse 21 —

*“Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” —
Ephesians 5:21*

Mutual submission is the foundation. Spousal respect is the expression. The fear of God — the Greek *phobeo* root — governs the entire marital structure. Respect between spouses is ultimately an act of worship directed toward God, not merely a domestic courtesy extended to a partner.

This mutual framework precedes and governs every gender-specific instruction that follows. Neither spouse is released from the call to honor the other. The asymmetry of roles does not produce an asymmetry of dignity.

Ellen White confirmed this architectural understanding — arguing that the home governed by mutual honor reflects the character of God most accurately and becomes the most powerful witness available to the watching world. She wrote that a wife’s genuine respect for her husband was not a concession of intelligence but an expression of covenant character.

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SECTION 2

The Theological Architecture of Ephesians 5:33

“Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

— Ephesians 5:33

The final verse of Paul’s marriage discourse is not accidental. It is architectural — a summary distillation of everything he argued across eleven verses. And it is deliberately asymmetrical. The husband is commanded to love. The wife is commanded to respect. Not because the other is unnecessary — but because each represents the deepest unmet need of the other.

The Greek Word — Phobetai.

The Greek word translated respect is phobetai — from phobeo, meaning to reverence, to honor, to hold in high regard. It is the same root used for the fear of God throughout Scripture. This is not coincidental. Paul was deliberately connecting the reverence a wife extends to her husband with the reverence both extend to God.

This does not make the husband God. It makes the structure of marriage a theological mirror — reflecting the relationship between Christ and the church, between God and His covenant

people. When a wife respects her husband, she is not merely maintaining domestic harmony. She is enacting a theological reality written into the covenant of marriage from its very foundation.

The Command That Cannot Be Conditional.

Respect is not earned in this passage. It is commanded. Because covenant love was never conditional. The same God who commands husbands to love wives who are unlovable commands wives to respect husbands who are imperfect. Both commands exceed human capacity. Both require divine grace to sustain.

Respect is not a personality trait. It is a covenant declaration — spoken daily in tone, in posture, in presence, and in the quiet decision to honor what God joined together.

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SECTION 3

How the Lack of Respect Impacts Him — 7 Reasons Men Walk Away

A man does not leave because he stopped loving. He leaves because he ran out of peace. Disrespect, dismissiveness, and emotional abuse are not personality quirks. They are covenant killers.

“The wife must respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:33). That command exists because God understood what its absence would cost — not just the man, but the marriage itself.

1

Disrespect Makes Him Feel Small at Home.

Consistent disrespect makes a man feel small in his own home — so he finds peace where you cannot follow. Psychologically, this is called identity threat. The brain’s threat-response system activates in chronic disrespect exactly as it does in physical danger. He is not overreacting. He is responding to a genuine wound.

2

Dismissiveness Destroys Intimacy.

Dismissing his thoughts, vision, and feelings destroys intimacy faster than any affair ever could. When his wife rolls her eyes at his ideas, cuts him off mid-sentence, or calls his efforts insufficient — she is not just wounding his ego. She is dismantling the emotional bridge that intimacy requires to survive.

3

Emotional Abuse Leaves Invisible Scars.

Mockery, sarcasm, and withheld love leave scars no one sees but everyone eventually feels. He cannot go to HR. He will not call 911. He will not cry in front of his friends. But inside he is breaking. And the man who breaks silently does not announce his departure. He simply disappears.

4

Public Humiliation Dismantles His Legacy.

Public humiliation does not just wound him. It dismantles his legacy and his will to lead. A man can handle battles at work. But when the war is at home — he is already defeated before the day begins. What is destroyed publicly cannot simply be rebuilt privately.

5

Minimizing His Effort Creates a Validation Void.

Minimizing his effort while demanding more produces the validation void that makes him vulnerable to someone else. Men do not primarily cheat because of lust. They cheat because of validation. Because where respect is absent — so is loyalty.

6

Control and Contempt Produce a Quiet Exit.

Control, manipulation, and contempt do not produce submission. They produce a quiet, permanent exit. A real man will not stay caged. He will find the freedom his soul was built for — and he will find it elsewhere if it cannot be found at home.

7

The Man Who Breaks Silently Disappears Permanently.

A man who breaks silently does not announce his departure. He simply disappears — emotionally first, then mentally, then physically. By the time the departure becomes visible, it has been happening invisibly for years. The disrespect was the slow erosion. The departure is the cliff.

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SECTION 4

7 Ways to Respect Him Starting Today

Disrespect that has been established as a pattern does not end with a single conversation. It ends with consistent, intentional, daily renovation of behavior — one interaction at a time.

1

Speak to Him Privately.

Correct him privately — never publicly, never in front of the children. Private correction is honor. Public correction is humiliation. This single discipline communicates more about how much you value his dignity than almost anything else available to you.

2

Listen Without Interrupting.

Listen when he speaks — fully, without interrupting, without dismissing what he brings to you. A man speaks less than a woman — what he does say has been filtered, considered, and chosen. When you dismiss it, you dismiss him. When you receive it fully, you give him the rarest gift in their communication.

3**Affirm His Effort Specifically.**

What gets praised gets repeated. Affirm his effort specifically and sincerely — not vaguely and not conditionally. Specificity signals that you are actually paying attention — and that what he does matters to you personally.

4**Defend His Name When He Is Not Present.**

What you say about him privately reveals what you truly think of him. Guard his name in every room. When he hears that you defended him in his absence, something shifts at the deepest level of his trust in you.

5**Trust His Leadership.**

Voice your concern privately, then support the direction together. Trust in his leadership is not weakness — it is covenant wisdom. A husband who leads and is consistently undermined eventually stops leading — not because he is incapable but because the cost of leading in an environment of mistrust exceeds its reward.

6**Express Gratitude for What He Provides.**

Seen or unseen, financial or emotional, large or small — gratitude for what a man gives multiplies what he gives. A man who feels appreciated consistently gives more. Gratitude is not just good manners. It is marital strategy.

7

Pursue Him Intentionally.

A man who feels chosen by his wife becomes the man she always needed him to be. Pursue him. Choose him. Visibly. Daily. Not because he has earned it in that moment — but because the covenant demands it and his soul requires it.

CONCLUSION

Respect Is the Most Powerful Tool a Wife Possesses.

The man you honor will move mountains. The man you diminish will move on.

You do not need a perfect husband to be a respectful wife. You need a covenant commitment to honor what God placed in your home.

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