

THE WOMAN'S NEED FOR LOVE

A Complete Study for Every Married Couple

CONTENTS

1. The Mutual Framework — Ephesians 5:25
 2. The Theological Architecture of Love — The Greek Word Agapao
 3. How the Absence of Love Impacts Her — 7 Ways a Loveless Marriage Wounds a Woman
 4. 7 Ways a Man Can Realistically Love His Wife Starting Today
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SECTION 1

The Mutual Framework — Ephesians 5:25

Theologically, love in Ephesians 5 does not begin at verse 25. It begins at verse 21 —

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

Mutual submission is the foundation. A husband’s sacrificial love is the expression. The fear of God — the same Greek phobeo root — governs the entire marital structure. Love between spouses is ultimately an act of worship directed toward God, not merely an emotion 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 love reflects the character of God most accurately and becomes the most powerful testimony available to the watching world. She wrote that a husband’s genuine love for his wife was not a concession of authority but an expression of covenant character — the clearest earthly reflection of Christ’s love for His church.

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SECTION 2

The Theological Architecture of Love — The Greek Word Agapao

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

— Ephesians 5:25

The command directed to husbands in Paul’s marriage discourse is not casual. It is catastrophic in its demand — a standard so high that no man can meet it through human effort alone. And it is deliberately specific. The wife is commanded to respect. The husband is commanded to love. Not because the other is unnecessary — but because each represents the deepest unmet need of the other.

The Greek Word — Agapao.

The Greek word translated love is agapao — the highest, most demanding form of love in all of Scripture. It is not eros — romantic attraction. It is not phileo — brotherly affection. Agapao is deliberate, sacrificial, unconditional, covenant love — the love that gives everything and demands nothing in return.

It is the same word used to describe God’s love for the world in John 3:16. Paul was not commanding a husband to feel something. He was commanding him to do something — consistently, sacrificially, and regardless of whether his wife deserved it in that moment.

This does not make the wife a passive recipient. It makes the structure of marriage a theological mirror — reflecting the relationship between Christ and the church, between a God who loved first and a people who were loved into transformation. When a husband loves his wife with agapao love, he is not merely maintaining domestic harmony. He is enacting the most powerful theological reality available to any human being — the lived demonstration of a love that lays down its life.

The Command That Cannot Be Conditional.

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

Love is not a feeling that arrives and departs based on circumstances. It is a covenant declaration — spoken daily in sacrifice, in presence, in patience, and in the consistent, deliberate decision to choose her above everything competing for what she deserves.

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SECTION 3

How the Absence of Love Impacts Her — 7 Ways a Loveless Marriage Wounds a Woman

A woman does not fall out of love suddenly. She is worn out of it — slowly, consistently, and almost always in silence. What begins as disappointment becomes distance. What begins as distance becomes despair.

“Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them” (Colossians 3:19). Bitterness is not always explosive. Sometimes it is the quiet withdrawal of warmth, attention, and intentional love — and a woman feels every degree of that withdrawal.

1

Her Identity Begins to Erode.

A woman’s sense of worth is profoundly shaped by how the man who chose her treats her daily. When love is withheld consistently, she does not simply feel unloved. She begins to question whether she is lovable — and that question, unanswered long enough, becomes a devastating internal verdict she carries into every dimension of her life.

2

Her Emotional Availability Shuts Down.

A woman who is not loved well does not simply become sad. She becomes guarded. Walls go up — not out of stubbornness but out of self-preservation. The emotional availability her husband most wants access to is the very thing his lovelessness systematically dismantled. She is not cold. She is protected.

3

Her Physical Health Deteriorates.

The connection between emotional deprivation and physical health is neurologically documented. Chronic emotional neglect elevates cortisol, suppresses immune function, and increases vulnerability to depression, anxiety, and stress-related illness. A woman unloved by her husband is not simply emotionally struggling. Her body is registering the deficit with measurable biological consequences.

4

Her Spiritual Life Suffers.

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way... so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7). God takes the spiritual impact of a loveless marriage seriously enough to connect it directly to a man’s prayer life. A woman denied covenant love is a woman whose spirit is being starved — and a starved spirit cannot fully flourish in its relationship with God.

5

She Becomes Vulnerable to Emotional Affairs.

Most emotional affairs do not begin with attraction. They begin with affirmation — a woman whose husband consistently withholds love becomes neurologically hungry for the environment that home was designed to provide. A man who listens, affirms, and pursues her emotionally becomes disproportionately powerful precisely because he is filling what her covenant was supposed to supply.

6

She Stops Believing the Marriage Can Change.

Hope is not unlimited. A woman can absorb disappointment, adjust expectations, and try again — but only for so long. Chronic lovelessness produces learned hopelessness — the quiet, devastating conclusion that nothing will ever be different. By the time she stops trying, she has usually already tried longer than anyone watching from outside ever realized.

7

She Carries the Wound Into the Next Generation.

What a woman experiences in her marriage does not stay between her and her husband. It travels — into her parenting, her daughters' understanding of what love looks like, and her sons' template for how a husband treats a wife. A loveless marriage does not simply wound two adults. It writes a script that the children will perform in their own relationships for decades to come.

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SECTION 4

7 Ways a Man Can Realistically Love His Wife Starting Today

Love that is not expressed is love that is not received. A woman cannot live on what her husband feels internally. She needs what he demonstrates consistently — in the ordinary, unglamorous, daily decisions that covenant love actually requires.

*“Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth”
(1 John 3:18). Deed and truth. Not intention. Not feeling.
Action, sustained over time, in the direction of the woman you chose.*

1

Pursue Her Emotionally — Daily.

A woman's deepest need is to feel genuinely known by the man she married. Ask her how she is — and wait for the real answer. Put down what you are holding. Make eye contact. Create the daily conversational space that tells her — your interior world matters to me, and I am not in a hurry to leave it. Emotional pursuit is not a grand gesture. It is the accumulated weight of daily attention.

2

Speak Life Over Her — Specifically and Consistently.

Words carry covenantal weight in a marriage. What a husband says to his wife — and about her — shapes her self-perception more powerfully than almost any other voice in her life. Affirm what she does. Affirm who she is. Name what you see in her that she cannot see in herself. A woman who is consistently spoken well of by her husband becomes the woman those words describe.

3

Be Present — Not Just Physically, But Fully.

One of the most common complaints of wives in struggling marriages is this — he is here but he is not here. Physical proximity without emotional presence is one of the most quietly damaging experiences in a marriage. Put the phone down. Turn toward her. Be in the room with all of you — not just the part that is not yet distracted.

4

Protect Her Rest and Carry Her Load.

A woman who carries the domestic, emotional, relational, and often vocational weight of the household simultaneously is a woman approaching depletion. Notice what she carries. Enter it without being asked. Take something off her plate before she has to ask you to. A husband who moves toward his wife's exhaustion rather than away from it communicates something profound — I see you, and what you carry matters to me enough to share it.

5

Defend Her Name and Her Honor — Always.

What a husband says about his wife when she is not present reveals the true condition of his heart toward her. Refuse to participate in wife-bashing. Speak well of her to your friends, your family, and your colleagues. Correct those who speak disrespectfully about her in your presence. And tell her — she needs to know that the man who knows her most intimately is also her most consistent defender in every room she does not occupy.

6

Lead the Spiritual Life of Your Home.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her” (Ephesians 5:25–26). A husband who loves his wife the way Christ loved the church leads her spiritually — through prayer together, through the consistent modeling of a life surrendered to God, through creating a home where God’s presence is tangible and His Word is honored.

7

Choose Her — Visibly, Repeatedly, and Without Condition.

A woman needs to know she is still chosen — not assumed, not taken for granted, not simply retained because the logistics of leaving are complicated. Choose her in the small decisions. Choose her publicly. Choose her when she is difficult, when the season is hard, and when choosing her costs you something. A wife who is chosen consistently by her husband becomes the most secure, most generous, most fully present version of herself.

CONCLUSION

Love Is the Most Powerful Tool a Husband Possesses.

The woman you love well will become more than you imagined she could be. The woman you neglect will become someone you no longer

recognize.

You do not need a perfect wife to be a loving husband. You need a covenant commitment to pursue what God placed in your home — consistently, sacrificially, and without waiting for conditions that are good enough to deserve it.

“Husbands, love your wives” (Ephesians 5:25). That was not a suggestion. It was not a recommendation for favorable circumstances. It was a command written for every season — including the ones that make loving her the hardest thing you have ever done.

Love her anyway.

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