

What Causes the Spirit of a Husband to React to the Spirit of His Wifeⁱ

²¹Submit to one another in fear of the Messiah. ²²Wives should submit to their husbands as they do to the L-rd; ²³because the husband is head of the wife, just as the Messiah, as head of the Messianic Community, is himself the one who keeps the body safe. ²⁴Just as the Messianic Community submits to the Messiah, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything...³³let each man love his wife as he does himself, and see that the wife respects her husband.

“Sometimes its hard to be a woman, giving all your love to just one man. You'll have bad times, and he'll have good times doing things that you don't understand. But if you love him you'll forgive him, even though he's hard to understand. And if you love him, Oh be proud of him. 'Cause after all he's just a man. Stand by your man, give him two arms to cling to, and something warm to come to, when nights are cold and lonely. Stand by your man, and tell the world you love him, keep giving all the love you can. Stand by your man, stand by your man. And show the world you love him, keep giving all the love you can, stand by your man.” T. Wynette, 1968

Why Do Wives React to their Husband's Leadership?

Most women want their husbands to take the lead in their marriage, but at the same time they want to lead their husbands. Scripture traces the source and solution of these conflicting desires to what took place in the Garden of Eden. But the truth is that a woman will only find her identity and fulfillment by carrying out the purposes for which *G-d* created her.

G-d made the woman to be a helpmeet to her husband. (“...I will make for him a companion suitable for helping him,” Genesis 2:18.) This means that the husband's leadership was established before the Fall. Adam would have to provide direction so that Eve would know how to aid or assist him. But this also means that the woman's submission was determined before the Fall. Eve's spirit had to be submissive in order to effectively help Adam.

However, when Adam and Eve sinned, *G-d* pronounced judgment upon both of them by saying to Eve, “...Your desire will be toward your husband, but he will rule over you.” (Genesis 3:16). In the Hebrew language the two clauses in this sentence are in opposition to each other. The same sentence structure with its antithetical clauses is found in Genesis 4:7 where *G-d* tells Cain that sin shall “desire” to control him, but that he must “rule over” sin. Based on this and other textual factors, a more literal translation of Genesis 3:16 is: “Your desire will be to [control] your husband and he will rule over [desire to dominate] you.”

Thus, the sin of Adam and Eve corrupted the willing submission of the wife and the loving leadership of the husband. Thereafter, the wife wants her husband to lead her, but she also wants to lead her husband. The continual tension caused by these competing desires is described by James. “What is causing all the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it your desires battling inside you?” (James 4:1).

Yeshua came into the world to re-establish that which was lost by Adam and Eve. His willing submission to the Father is a demonstration to the wife of how to submit to her husband. His sacrificial giving of Himself shows the husband how to be a loving leader to his wife. (See Ephesians 5:22-25.) Only in *Messiah* can the wife's willing submission and the husband's loving leadership be restored. Consider the following questions for personal evaluation: (1) Have you purposed to be a follower of your husband? (2) Would your husband and your children say that you respect your husband? (3) Have you sincerely communicated to your husband that you want him to be your spiritual leader? And (4) Have you appropriated *Yeshua*'s victory over the conflicting desire to control your husband?

Can You Identify what Causes the Spirit of a Husband to React to the Spirit of His Wife?

One wife defined her experience in marriage in the following way: “When I was first married, I felt that things were going to be great. I was sure that I had married the perfect man. Our first year was like a honeymoon. The second year was a little less than that. And the third year the children began to come, and the spirit of our marriage began to pull apart. I knew in my heart that if this trend continued, our

marriage would eventually end. What I didn't know was that I was grieving my husband's spirit in several ways. I believe that when you begin to realize what you are doing and take definite steps to change, the spirit of your marriage will be restored in a most beautiful way."

A. Not Respecting Him As A Man {The Most Important}

When a wife sows lack of respect for her husband's decisions and resistance to proper physical affection, her husband doubts his ability to meet her needs and is drawn to other women who respect and admire him. That is why we are told in Scripture "...see that the wife respects her husband." (Eph. 5:33).

How can You Communicate Respect to Your Husband as a Man?

1. Praising him for the positive qualities and abilities that you see in him
In order to do this, you must be sure that your focus is not on his faults, but on his positive qualities. Live in the spirit of Philippians 4:8 "*In conclusion, brothers, focus your thoughts on what is true, noble, righteous, pure, lovable or admirable, on some virtue or on something praiseworthy*"
2. Trust *G-d* to provide for the family's financial needs through his leadership. Financial support involves contentment with the basics as explained in 1 Timothy 6:8. "*so if we have food and clothing, we ought to be satisfied with these*"
3. Supporting and becoming actively involved in his ideas and goals. This is the basic function of the wife as a helpmeet. (See Genesis 2:18.) If his goals are not in harmony with Scripture, make a wise appeal. Your Biblical job as a wife is to help him become successful.
4. Demonstrating a willingness to respond to proper physical affection. A wife must not use her body for anything that violates *G-d*'s design. She must keep the marriage bed holy, because her body belongs to the *L-rd*. ("*I exhort you, therefore, brothers, in view of G-d's mercies, to offer yourselves as a sacrifice, living and set apart for G-d. This will please him; it is the logical "Temple worship" for you.*" Romans 12:1.) However, within the limits of *G-d*'s specific directives for the marriage act, the wife should respond based on "*The wife is not in charge of her own body, but her husband is; likewise, the husband is not in charge of his own body, but his wife is.*" (1 Corinthians 7:4)

B. Not Accepting Him As A Spiritual Leader

Scripture gives the following command to the wife, not to the husband. "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the L-rd*" (Ephesians 5:22). In a literal sense, this Scripture states that it is the responsibility of wives to work at getting themselves in a state of submission to their own husbands. When a wife sows resistance to her husband's spiritual leadership and when she lacks confidence that *G-d* is working through him, her husband becomes discouraged and frustrated in trying to be her spiritual leader. He then begins to shift decision-making to his wife.

How Do You Demonstrate to Your Husband That You Accept Him as Your Spiritual Leader

1. Expressing gratefulness for any attempts he makes to be a spiritual leader. Thank your husband for his prayers and let him know how much it means to you when you see him reading Scripture or talking to someone else about the *L-rd*. Your husband's leadership may not fully conform to your expectations of how it should be done. However, he needs support for the steps he has already taken.
2. Communicating confidence that *G-d* is working through your husband's decisions. Sometimes *G-d* will reveal cautions to you about an important decision that He will not reveal to your husband. Because of this, it is important for you to wisely report what you see. In this same way, Pilate's wife reported to Pilate what she learned from a dream about *Yeshua*'s innocence. (See Matthew 27:19.) If your husband does not listen (Pilate did not listen), however, you can be confident that *G-d* is going to work through his decision to accomplish other purposes. You should look for these purposes and share them with your husband. For example, if your husband makes

an unwise business decision, it may be that *G-d* wants to remove your focus and confidence from money and place it on Himself

3. Admiring qualities of spiritual leadership that you see in your husband. Spiritual leadership involves more than prayer, reading the Bible, and witnessing. It involves the inward strength of character that is demonstrated by standing for what is right. Whenever a man refuses to compromise Scriptural convictions, he deserves the highest praise and admiration from his wife. Note that spiritual leadership is not determined by where a man is, but in the direction he is going.

C. Failure To Wisely And Lovingly Appeal To Him

When a wife sows pressure by demanding nagging and manipulating, her husband reacts in harshness or gives up in frustration. But we are taught that: *“Just as iron sharpens iron, a person sharpens the character of his friend.”* (Proverbs 27:17).

How To Appeal To Your Husband

When you see that your husband is going to bring damage to the *L-rd*, to your family, to others, or to himself, you should appeal to him. However, the following principles must be used:

1. Being in right standing before the need to appeal arises. To be in right standing means to be under the authority of your husband and in good fellowship with him before the appeal needs to be made. Esther was in right standing with her husband, King Ahasuerus, when she was called upon to appeal to him for the life of her people. (See Esther 7:1-6.)
2. Using the same basis to appeal to your husband that you use to appeal to *G-d*. *Yeshua* taught his disciples to pray. (See Matthew 6:9-13.) He gave them three important factors upon which to base their appeal to *G-d*. The same factors should be used to appeal to your husband: concern for his reputation, concern for his goals, and concern for his authority
3. Conveying the right attitudes. When a wife demonstrates the attitudes of love, loyalty, gratefulness, honor, obedience, and a servant’s spirit, she has tremendous influence with her husband. Without these attitudes, her appeal would probably fall on deaf ears. (See 1 Peter 3:1-6.)
4. Waiting for the right timing and cheerfully responding to his final decision

D. Neglecting To Develop Inward Beauty

When a wife sows lack of inward godliness and outward neatness and modesty, her husband loses respect for her and is more easily tempted by other women. *“Rather, let [your beauty be the adorning] of the inner character of your heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit. In G-d’s sight this is of great value.”* (1 Peter 3:4).

How To Develop Genuine Attractiveness

1. Concentrating on the inward qualities that are of great value in the eyes of *G-d*. A meek spirit is demonstrated when you yield all personal rights and expectations to *G-d* and are sincerely thankful for things that are done for you. A quiet spirit is developed when you experience freedom from fear and worry and when you show an inward confidence that *“... all things work together for good to them that love G-d...”* (Romans 8:28).
2. Maintaining personal neatness in appearance and dress. The way that you appear to your husband when he arrives home may indicate to him how important he is to you.
3. Dressing to draw attention to your countenance Learn which colors go best with your skin tones. Concentrate on these colors when you shop for clothes or when you make them. Have a happy, joyful face and use your clothes to draw attention to it
4. Controlling weight on the basis of five Scriptural truths. Your body is made in the image of *G-d*. (See Genesis 1:27.) Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (See 1 Corinthians 3:16-47.) Your body is a member of the body of Messiah (See 1 Corinthians 6:15.) The members of your body

become weapons of righteousness by yielding them to *G-d* (see Romans 6:13) and by claiming the victory that *Yeshua* already won over the lusts of the flesh. (See Romans Chapters 6-8.)

E. Lack Of Genuine Gratefulness Shown To The Husband

When a wife sows continual expectations of her husband for things that she wants him to do for her, her husband feels that he is a prisoner of her expectations. He does not believe he can ever please her, and he reacts to her lack of gratefulness. He looks for ways of reducing her expectations, and he becomes vulnerable to other women who show gratitude to him. “*Be ye thankful*” (Colossians 3:15). “*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of G-d in Messiah Yeshua concerning you*” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

How To Develop A Spirit Of True Gratefulness

1. Giving all your personal expectations to *G-d* Expectations come by comparing what you do not have with what others do have. Unfulfilled expectations are devastating to relationships unless they are given to the *L-rd*. Your hope for their fulfillment is then focused upon the *L-rd* and not your spouse. When you give your expectations to *G-d*, you can say: “My soul, wait thou only, only upon *G-d*; for from Him is my expectation” (song He is My Defense, based on Psalm 62:5).
2. Learning to be content with the basics. You can only surrender your expectations if you are prepared to be content with just food and clothing. This kind of contentment brings great gain. (See 1 Timothy 6:6-8.)
3. Setting affections on things above. Once you take your eyes off temporal things and put them on eternal things, you will be able to see that your life does not consist in the things that you have, but in the treasures that you are laying up for yourself in heaven. (See Colossians 3:2; Matthew 6:19-20.)
4. Telling your husband how he is benefiting your life and making you joyful in the *L-rd*.

F. Resistance To His Attempts To Protect You

When a wife sows lack of understanding appreciation, or heed to her husband’s cautions or verbal warnings, he stops sharing the warnings, counsel, or direction that *G-d* gives to him. Wives must be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of *G-d* be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:5).

How to Respond to the Warnings of Your Husband

1. Telling him about the hidden fears, pressures, and weaknesses that you have so that he knows what kind of protection that you need. Do not expect him to know how to protect you.
2. Suggesting things that he can do, or avoid doing that will provide strength and protection for you. Most men need direction on how to protect their wife.
3. Asking him to pray for you and with you when you are going through special times of temptation, discouragement or pressure.
4. Refusing to do things that you know would displease your husband and would not be beneficial to you

G. Reaction To His Need For Times To Be Alone With *G-d*

When a wife sows reaction and feelings of rejection when her husband wants to be alone with the *L-rd*, he feels frustrated and spiritually empty. “*And as long as he sought the L-rd, G-d made him to prosper*” (2 Chronicles 26:5).

How To Encourage Your Husband To Spend Time Alone With G-d

1. Letting him know that you are pleased when you see him spending time with the *L-rd*. Realize that when a man is out of fellowship with the *L-rd* he will also be out of fellowship with his family.
2. Encouraging him to find a quiet place where he can study, pray, read, and think. Every man grows as he shoulders his own burdens. (See Galatians 6:5.) Every man needs to have a “Bethel” where he can meet with *G-d*. (See Genesis 28.)

Closing Thoughts & Personal Evaluation

1. One thing that I can do this week to let my husband know that I respect him as a man: _____
2. One thing that I can point out to my husband this week to let him know how he has been my spiritual leader: _____
3. One area that I know I should appeal to him about this week: _____
4. One new thing that I can do this week to develop inward and outward attractiveness: _____
5. One personal expectation that I can give to the *L-rd* so that I can be more grateful to my husband: _____
6. One area in my life about which I can share with my husband my need for his protection: _____
7. One thing that I can do this week to encourage my husband to seek the *L-rd*: _____

“Be not deceived; *G-d* is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

ⁱ Based on *Training Faithful Women*, IBLP, 1984, USA