

# 7 Ways to Care for Your Wife

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In that extremely complex and, at times, hard to understand section of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we come across the comparison between the married and the unmarried (*1 Cor. 7*). In short, the Apostle insists that marriage is good (and the norm) but that it brings with it a division of attention. Those who are married have a preoccupation with their spouse. Those who are unmarried are free to more fully "care about the things of the Lord" while "the married man cares about...how to please his wife" and "the married woman cares about...how to please her husband." This forces us to ask question, "What does it look like to biblically care about the needs of my wife?" That is a question that I feel as though I am just beginning to learn how to answer 11 years into marriage. While there is no silver bullet, there are many things that the Scriptures teach us in order to help guide the process of learning to love your spouse. Here are 7 basic, biblical ways that the married man can seek to please his wife:

1. **Lead Her in Worship.** Whether this occurs one on one or in the context of family worship, a godly husband will seek to "*wash his wife with the water of the word*" and to lead her "*to the throne of grace*" that they might together receive grace and mercy to help in time of need. A man who truly loves his wife will want to sing God's praises with his wife and to encourage her with God's word. This is the most foundational way that a godly husband can love and serve his wife. Everything else in the marriage is secondary to and will necessary wax and wane commensurate with this all important calling. God has given a believing husband his wife so that he might shepherd her soul to glory.
2. **Carry Her Burdens.** One of the apostolic words to husbands regarding the way in which they are to love their wives is that they are to "*dwell with them with understanding*" (*1 Peter 3:7*). A loving husband will seek to be gentle toward his wife. A truly loving husband will seek to listen to his wife as she relays her burdens. He will be patient with her when she seems to be folding under the pressures of life. He will seek to understand why she is struggling even when he doesn't have the same burdens.
3. **Provide for Her.** A man who truly loves his wife will be a man who labors diligently to provide for his wife. The loving husband will be a hard working husband. This doesn't mean that he will make lots of money; but it does mean that his priority is to "*provide for his own*" (*1 Tim. 5:8*). He will work as many jobs as might be necessary in order to provide for his wife. Being a provider is something to which a loving husband must be committed.
4. **Serve Her in the Home.** I don't know if it is possible for someone to hate folding laundry as much as I hate folding laundry. My soul has a holy (and, often, an unholy) hatred of it. However, when I recognize that my wife is tired from bearing my burdens, taking our kids to school, teaching one of our sons at home, doing the shopping, driving the boys to different events and caring for many, many, many other things in our home and lives, one of the most loving things that I can do for her is to fold the five laundry baskets full of clothes. Doing the laundry, cleaning the dishes, repairing things in the home, pressure washing the house, taking her car to get the oil changed, etc. are some of the very tangible ways that a godly husband can learn to love and serve his wife in the home.
5. **Praise Her in Public.** One of the things that has not often been pointed out about Proverbs 31 is that it actually tells us quite a number of things about the godly husband--and does not speak merely about the godly wife. The godly husband is sitting at the gates of the city--as a leader in the community. He is working diligently for his wife and children. But, he is also doing something at the city gates. He is praising his wife for all of her qualities to the other leaders in the city. The Proverb concludes with these words: "*let her own works praise her in the gates*" (*Prov. 31:31*). A loving husband will sing the praises of his wife in public (unless she is adamant that she doesn't like it when he does so ; ) ).

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6. **Show Her Affection.** It almost goes without saying that a loving husband will be affectionate with his wife. This certainly includes spending time alone with her. It may take the form of regular date nights away from the children. I usually find that it is one of the best things for our marriage when my wife and I are able to pull away from the busyness and cares of life to spend time together foster our love for one another. Of course, it also means not withholding the sexual intimacy that is her God-given right. It should seem strange for us to find the Apostle Paul commanding husbands with the following admonition: “*Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her...*” (1 Cor. 7:3). However, life in this selfish and fallen world necessitates such a command. A godly husband should commit to nurturing intimacy and affection with his wife.
7. **Be Transparent With Her.** I have never met a woman who didn’t long to have a husband she could trust. How could anyone in their right mind enjoy living with someone that they couldn’t trust? A godly husband will talk often and openly with his wife. He will be transparent with her about finances, activities and struggles. Surely, a measure of propriety and wisdom is needed when seeking to approach the issue of personal struggles with lust. However, as a rule, a man who wants to truly love and serve his wife will be a man who is open and honest with her. The words of James 5:16 apply to the marriage relationship no less than to our other relations in the church: “*Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.*”

All of these things must, of course, be pursued in the context of our own relationship with Christ. It is only through union with Jesus--in His death and resurrection--that you will ever be able to begin to love and care for your wife in these ways. When we fail (and we will most certainly fail), we go back to the Lord in brokenness and contrition. We confess our sin to Him and ask Him for grace to grow in these areas. We must meditate often on the fact that Jesus has done all of these things for us as the Heavenly Bridegroom of our souls. He leads us in worship on a daily and weekly basis (Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 2:10-13); He carries our burdens and sorrows (Matt. 11:28-30); He constantly provides for our spiritual and material needs (Matt. 7:7); He serves us in His church (Mark 10:45; Luke 12:37; John 13:1-17); He speaks well of us, even though we are sinful and often wander (Song of Songs 1:15; 4:1, 7); He is intimate with us in communion (John 13:25; 21:20); and He is open with us about all of His and His Father’s works (Matt. 13:11; John 15:15). Brothers, we must learn to live out of our union with Christ and to listen to all that His word teaches us about our responsibilities as husbands if we are to ever truly care for the needs of our wives.