

The Ideal Relationship Between Husband and Wife

Paul S. Rees said, "Marriage is not an end in itself; it is a means by which we may grow in the Lord and realize His glory. Selfishness breaks communion, destroys prayer."

In marriage, you are not just in relationship with each other; you're in relationship with God. Consider how a husband might guard that trajectory of the relationship.

The early church father Tertullian wrote this letter to his wife around A.D. 202. It represents for all time the ideal relationship between husband and wife:

"How beautiful, then, the marriage of two Christians, two who are one in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, *one in the religion they practice*. They are as brother and sister, both servants of the same Master. Nothing divides them, either in flesh or in Spirit. They are in very truth, two in one flesh, and *where there is but one flesh, there is also but one spirit*.

"They pray together, they worship together, they fast together; instructing one another, encouraging one another, strengthening one another.

"Side-by-side they face difficulties and persecution, share their consolations. *They have no secrets from one another, they never shun each other's company*; they never bring sorrow to each other's hearts. ... Psalms and hymns they sing to one another. Hearing and seeing this, Christ rejoices. To such as these He gives His peace. Where there are two together, there also He is present, and *where He is, there evil is not*."

If husbands do not properly relate to their wives, Peter says their prayers will be hindered. Failure to live considerately

and appropriately with your wife negatively impacts your relationship to God.

Unlike Tertullian, Sam Shoemaker once talked about the fact we may not find utopia in the Christian home, that *"the Christian home is not one in which relationships are perfect ... but one in which imperfections are acknowledged and where problems are worked out in prayer and obedience to the light God sends. In such homes there is great freedom for people to say what they think and express what they feel. ... People are allowed to grow up, to make mistakes, to be themselves, to laugh."*

Do you allow that of your spouse?

Extend grace to your wife or husband, and you'll begin to experience an atmosphere of grace in your home.

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