

The Christian Home (13): Husbandry Duties (part 3)

Having considered love (affection), we come this week to provision/protection, which leaves leadership for next week.

I. Husbandry Provision/Protection

1. *Provision*. "A husband that tenderly respects his wife, but does not providently care for her, shows more affection than discretion. He may have a kind heart, but he lacks a wise head. How then can he be a good head to his wife? Some short-term happiness she may have by him, but small profit and benefit can she reap from him" (Gouge).¹ (1) How must husbands provide? Husbands must provide according to their present means and abilities. "The husband ought to provide for his wife, and cheerfully furnish her with what is needful and convenient according to his station and ability" (Boston).² "Unless he would be charged as having neither the love of a husband, nor the faith of a Christian, nor the nature of a man, he must provide for his wife, giving her not only the comfort, nurture, and love she requires, but also the simple necessities and, where he justly can, the easing comforts of life" (Beeke).³

(2) What must husbands provide? Husbands are to provide for the spiritual and physical needs of their wife. "The provident care which a husband ought to have of his wife regards her soul and body" (Gouge).⁴ (a) Her soul. "For her *soul*, means of spiritual edification must be provided, and those both private and public. Private means are holy and religious exercises in the house, as reading the Word, prayer, catechizing, etc. These, being the spiritual food of the soul, are to be provided and used every day, as our bodily food" (Gouge).⁵ "Public means are the holy ordinances of God publicly performed by God's minister. The care of a husband for his wife in this respect is so to order his place of residence, and provide other needed things, that his wife may be made partaker of it" (Gouge).⁶

If men of wisdom and ability purchase or build a house for their residence, they will be sure it shall be where sweet rivers and waters are, and good pasture ground, and where all necessary provision may be had. God's Word preached is a spring of water of life; the place where it is preached a pleasant, profitable pasture; all necessary provision for the soul may there be had. Let this therefore be most of all sought after, and no residence settled but where this may be had.⁷

(b) Her body. "This includes in health and sickness. In health by providing such things as are needed to preserve health, as sufficient food, clothing, and similar necessities. In sickness such things are to be provided as are needed either to restore her health, or to comfort, cherish, and refresh her in her sickness" (Gouge).⁸ "The love of a husband to his wife must outlast his life. He must not, when dying, so much remember that he is a father, as to forget that he is a husband, and thus must mind the root (wife) before the branches (children)" (Swinnock).⁹

(3) Why must husbands provide? (a) Men are to imitate Christ. Christ provides for the needs of His bride. "It behooves the husband to imitate the care and providence of Christ: for He would have noth-

¹ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:237

² Thomas Boston, *Works*, 2:218

³ Joel Beeke, *Living in a Godly Marriage*, 186

⁴ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:238

⁵ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:238

⁶ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:239

⁷ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:239-240

⁸ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:240-241

⁹ George Swinnock, *Works*, 1:496

ing wanting to His Church, which is either necessary or conducive to its welfare, as to clothing, food, and life: so the husband ought to acquire by his labor, and communicate to his wife out of love, whatever either the necessity of dignity of her person shall require" (Davenant).¹⁰

Husbands are to provide all things necessary for their wives that conduce to health, food and raiment, and that according to the decency and decorum of their estate; for herein they imitate the care and providence of Christ, who has provided all things for His spouse; food for their souls, garments of salvation to cover their nakedness, healing grace to cure their distempers. So must the husband do for his wife.¹¹

(b) Men are by nature providers. If women are to be "workers at home" (Tit.2:5), then men are to be workers outside the home (which means they are to provide for the home from without). This is why men experience the effects of the curse outside the home, whereas women experience them within the home (Gen.3:16-19). Thus, it was Jacob's desire to provide for his own house (Gen.30:30), and Paul warned men, "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1Tim.5:8). "Who are of a husband's house, if not his wife? In his house, who are more properly *his own* than his wife? If then a husband does not provide for his wife, what is he to be counted? (Gouge)?¹²

(c) Wives have left their original provider. "When a woman is married to her husband, she leaves behind the provision of her father, the nurture of her mother, and all the comfort of her friends; will he not provide for her? To whom else is she to turn if she cannot find all this provision in her husband" (Beeke).¹³

There is great reason why he should provide for her, because he has taken her from her parents and friends, and has received that portion which they allotted her, and has authority committed to him over her, and she is put in submission under him. Who then shall provide for her if he does not, whose wholly and only she is?¹⁴

2. *Protection*. "Implicit in the command to love your wife as Christ loved the church is the responsibility to protect her from danger. 'But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one' (2Tehss.3:3)" (Priolo).¹⁵ And yet, the husband's responsibility to protect his wife is explicitly found in Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." "The Greek verb from which the word *savior* is derived means 'to save.' It involves keeping someone safe and sound, rescuing him or her from danger or destruction, and saving him or her from judgment, evil, injury, peril, disease, or death" (Priolo).¹⁶ "A husband is a *savior* to his wife. For this end the Lord, who subjected a woman to her husband, gave to his sex greater strength, courage, and boldness than to hers, that he might protect her who is the weaker vessel" (Gouge).¹⁷

A husband's love will enflame his strength and cause him to put himself between his wife and danger. He will spread his cloak of protection over her as Boas did for Ruth

¹⁰ John Davenant, *Colossians*, 2:162

¹¹ Thomas Manton, *Works*, 19:472

¹² William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:237

¹³ Joel Beeke, *Living in a Godly Marriage*, 186

¹⁴ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:238

¹⁵ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 205

¹⁶ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 205

¹⁷ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:252

(Ruth 3:9) and as the Lord does for His people (Ruth 2:12; Ezek.16:8). He will be a hedge of protection about her so that whatever is aimed at her will strike him first.¹⁸

A wife is compared, in Scripture, to a fruitful vine: now a vine is a weak tender plant, and requires support, and the husband should be as the houseside (walls of house) for her stay and support; and therefore woman was at first made of a rib taken from under the man's arm: the office of the arm is to repel and keep off injuries; which signifies unto us, that the husband ought to defend his wife from all wrong and injuries, that she may be exposed unto.¹⁹

(1) Bad influences. "He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed" (Prov.13:20). "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good habits'" (1Cor.15:33). Husbands must protect their wives from bad or negative influences. These can come from the TV, music, books, or people (friends and family). "People can influence our thoughts, our values, our motives, our desires, our moods, our decisions, our language, and even our appearance" (Priolo).²⁰

Lou Priolo suggested three relationships husbands must protect their wives from.²¹ First, the children. For various reasons, some women seek to meet their emotional needs in their children and not husbands. This mean that practically, the child (either son or daughter) replaces the husband as their closest and most intimate friend. This may be especially common where the husband is emotionally absent. She may feel more open with a child than her husband. But this distorts the purpose of marriage and the parent/child distinction. "She is *your* lifetime companion, not theirs. *You*, not the children, are to be her best friend" (Priolo).²²

Now, I'm certainly not discouraging the natural and biblical development of a parent-child friendship—especially as the child matures. Indeed, I believe that biblical parenting is about having a relationship with your children—a close one. What I am warning you about is allowing either parent to develop a closer friendship with any of the children than they have with each other. In other words, as a general rule, the self-revelation curtain should be pulled back farther between a husband and wife than it is between parent and child.²³

Second, the in-laws or parents. "Again, there is absolutely nothing inherently wrong with having an in-law (or parent) as one of your close friends. In many cases it is preferable. The danger comes when a married man or woman experiences more intimacy with (and/or dependence on) a parent than with (or on) a spouse" (Priolo).²⁴ Later in this chapter, Priolo went on to describe "in-laws and relatives with bad attitudes." "Anger, criticism, gossip, contentiousness, inordinate curiosity, and meddling are some of the more common 'in-law'—related problems" (Priolo).²⁵ Third, close friends. "Your wife is to depend on you to provide her with comforting emotional and spiritual support more than on anyone else (except the Lord)" (Priolo).²⁶ Husbands must protect their wives from friends who encourage discontentment or disobedience.

¹⁸ Joel Beeke, *Living in a Godly Marriage*, 185

¹⁹ Ezekiel Hopkins, *Works* 1:416

²⁰ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 60

²¹ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 211-212

²² Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 211

²³ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 211-212

²⁴ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 212

²⁵ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 221

²⁶ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 212

(2) Bad theology. Husbands be aware what religious books, music, and podcasts their wives exposed to. "You must be a spiritual leader to your wife and protect her from the false teachers of our day. Some such teachers come from outside the realm of Christianity and some from within. They come to lead your wife astray. Sometimes they purposely deceive; sometimes they themselves are deceived (2Tim.3:13)" (Priolo).²⁷

(3) Bad attitudes. Lou Priolo suggested several "Unbiblical 'Isms'" that wives need protection from.²⁸ First, materialism: "the belief that one's happiness is necessarily and directly related to the abundance of things that one possesses." Second, perfectionism: "an all-or-nothing mentality whose subjective standard is higher or more exacting than the Bible's." Third, legalism: "elevating manmade laws to the same level of authority as God-given commands." Fourth, humanism: "the godless philosophy of this age, which deifies man, dethrones God, and scoffs at such concepts as the existence and worship of God, the inspiration of Scripture, supernatural creation, sin and its consequences, eternal life, and the reality of heaven and hell." Fifth, feminism "the humanistic tenet teaching that submission on the part of the wife to her husband is demeaning to women because it violates a so-called notion of 'equality of the sexes.'"

(4) Bad children. By this is meant, disrespectful and/or abusive children. "He is to protect her to the utmost of his power from the injuries of others, and particularly from the insults, whether or children or servants in the family, as well as neighbors" (Boston).²⁹ "One of the most important areas in which husbands can protect their wives is from verbal assault by the children. These attacks come in the form of criticism, manipulation, vindictive acts of disobedience, and various other disrespectful forms of communication" (Priolo).³⁰

Children grown older, that are proud and stubborn, will be ready to rise up against their mother, especially if she is a step-mother, because she is the weaker sex. The presence of a father is most effective generally speaking to maintain respect in the home. Therefore the husband must be a help to his wife, and maintain her honor against them, even though they are children of a former wife.³¹

(5) Bad scheduling. By this is meant overscheduling. Husbands need to ensure their wives don't overburden themselves (even with good activities and ministry). Lou Priolo points out a fourfold priority that must come before additional activities: "your personal relationship and walk with Christ; your ministry to your spouse; your ministry to your children; your ministry to your employers and/or employees."³² "There are 168 hours in each week. A person can accomplish only so much in that amount of time. If you or your wife consistently do not get all of your weekly responsibilities completed in that time, there are only two possible explanations for your inefficiency. Either you are wasting time or you have assumed more responsibility than the Lord intended you to have" (Priolo).³³

²⁷ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 215

²⁸ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 222-223

²⁹ Thomas Boston, *Works*, 2:217-218

³⁰ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 219

³¹ William Gouge, *Building a Godly Home*, 2:253

³² Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 218

³³ Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, 215