

1 Corinthians 7:3-4 (K. Gorgas) 167923

The Christian Shepherd: 2001, Thoughts on Marriage Relationships (7:3-4)

"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (1 Cor. 7:3-4).

A husband is to shower his wife with affection. God holds him ultimately responsible for the character of the marriage. "Christ . . . loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). As husbands, we are to love our wives in the same way, giving our all to them and for them. An aged brother, after many happy years of marriage, told me that, in his observation, a wife is like a flower. Given the warmth and light of her husband's affection, she will bloom and blossom and delight her husband with the sweet fragrance of her love. A husband who selfishly or carelessly neglects to nourish and cherish his wife acts as a killing frost in the garden of affection.

Then the wife is instructed to render the same benevolence ("kindness" or "goodwill"—from the Greek) towards her husband. The one is not conditional on the other, but in the fear of God each of us is to look not on our own things (Phil. 2:4) but to the needs and desires of the one with whom we are "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7).

The world today makes much of the woman's right over her own body. God's Word (in verse 4) instructs us very differently. The wife doesn't have power (authority) over her own body, but rather her husband. Satan's lie to the woman since the beginning has been, "Yea, hath God said?" Let us be very careful to not be seduced by his guile and craft, nor to fall in with the wicked and skewed humanistic philosophies of "this present evil world."

On the other hand, neither does the husband have power over his body. His wife does. He ought not refuse the needs and desires of his wife. He is not to selfishly insist on his own desires being met, while refusing to consider those of his spouse. She is the weaker vessel and is to be treated with gracious and loving honor and consideration by her husband.

Thus we see that neither husband nor wife is to withhold relations of the physical realm from the other. Doing so shows ignorance or indifference to His revealed will and can easily lead to serious difficulties in a marriage. Remember, we are not our own, for we have been "bought with a price." We are to glorify God with our bodies and with our spirits, which are God's (1 Cor. 6:20).

Christians are called to walk on earth as "children of light," always acting towards each other in love. I am to conduct myself towards my wife in the same way that Christ has acted towards the church—His beloved bride. May these things search our hearts.

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