

Different Commands Rewarded With One Promise in Marriage

“¹Likewise, wives, be submitted to your own husbands so that—even if some do not obey the message—by the wives’ conduct, without a word they may be won over ²as they observe your pure, reverent conduct. ³Don’t let your beauty (adornment) be external—braiding the hair and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes. ⁴Instead let it be in the hidden person of the heart, with the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. ⁵For this is the way the holy women, who put their hope in God, used to beautify themselves long ago—being submitted to their own husbands ⁶just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (adoni) You have become her daughters by doing what is good and not fearing intimidation. ⁷In the same way, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way. Though they are weaker partners, honor them as equal heirs of the grace of life. In this way, your prayers will not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:1-7).

In this week’s *Torah* reading (*Chayei Sarah*) it is evident that even at the end of Sarah’s life, Abraham loved Sarah and wanted only the best for her. Abraham and Sarah have been modeling principles of marriage for us since *Genesis 12*. True marriage begins with a oneness (an *echad*) of spirit and Abraham and Sarah were *totally together (right or wrong)*. There was respect from Sarah to Abraham (*calling him adoni*) and love from Abraham to Sarah (*obeying her in the Hagar affair and always treating her as an equal partner*).

When *Yah Adonai* joins a man and a woman together in marriage, He gave two different commands with one and the same promise as a reward for each keeping their command. He told husbands to *love their wives*, and He told wives to *honor or respect their husbands*. Sometimes men think that it would have been easier if He gave a straightforward command: *for the wives to be submissive and for the husbands to make sure that they stayed submissive*. But wives using the same line of reasoning would argue that the command should have been *for husbands to love them and for them to make sure that their husbands love them, and every time you fail, they are to tell you that you’ve failed*. But He gave us two different commands that on the surface seem to have very little relationship with each other. Husbands are *to love* and wives are *to honor and respect*.

²¹Also submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for Messiah—²²wives to your own husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as Messiah also is head of His community—Himself the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as Messiah’s community is submitted to Messiah, so also the wives to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives just as Messiah also loved His community and gave Himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, having cleansed her by immersion (mikvah) in the word. ²⁷Messiah did this so that He might present to Himself His glorious community—not having stain or wrinkle or any such thing, but in order that she might be holy and blameless. ²⁸In the same way, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it—just as Messiah also does His community, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). ³²This mystery is great—but I am talking about Messiah and His community. ³³In any case, let each of you love his own wife as himself, and let the wife respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:21-33).

When I appear before the *Judgment Seat of the Messiah*, and I have to give an account for everything I have done in the flesh, whether good or bad, my wife will have to wait outside, because the command to love her was given to me and I have to give an account for that command. And when she goes in to give an account of how submissive she was, the Lord will say, *Tony, you wait outside*. Because whether or not your wife was submissive is none of your business. Similarly is none of your business wives whether or not your husband loved you. What do I mean by this? Because one of the most destructive fights between a husband and a wife are when a husband picks up a passage that was written for wives and *reads out loud in anger* to his wife (or *vice-versa*). He might say: *look what the Bible says!* Husbands; the Bible says that to your wife, not to you. So sit tight and stay put. She has to deal with that passage. Why is that? Very simple; God gave us two different commands, but they have the same promise. In *Ephesians* it says that we are to love our wives the same way the

Messiah loves the Congregation. If we love our wives, the same thing will happen to our wives that is happening to the *Body of Messiah*: the spots and the wrinkles are going to be removed.

The Bible says that *when* we love our wives with *unconditional* (*agape*, Greek), a *1 Corinthians 13 love* (the *Love of Yah Adonai*) the *wrinkles and spots that are there, are removed* and that is the promise. In *1 Peter Chapter 3* it says that if a wife is submissive to her own husband, and her husband is disobedient to the Word, what happens to that husband through the wife's submission: he is won over. Our problem nowadays is that we read and interpret this principle through the grid of *psychology*. If we apply psychological assumptions to this while overlooking the fact that all of *1 Peter Chapter 3* has to do with marriage, not just the first seven verses. For example: *"¹⁸For Messiah once suffered for sins also—the righteous for the unrighteous – in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Ruach. ¹⁹Through the Ruach He also went and preached to the spirits in prison (those who disobeyed long ago)...²²He has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels and authorities and powers subjected to Him"* (*1 Peter 3:18, 19, 22*). What is the context for the instructions given regarding marriage in *1 Peter 3*? The answer is *spiritual warfare*. It says that when we suffer by doing right, something happens in the spiritual realm that the spiritual powers and authorities and principalities behave the way they are supposed to behave – they remain subject to *Messiah Yeshua*. Thus it says to the wives to *"submit yourself to your own husbands as unto the Lord."* The answer is because *Messiah Yeshua* has all principalities and powers *under His authority*. But when a wife rebels, and by rebelling against her husband she is actually rebelling against *Messiah Yeshua*, she gives ground to all demonic forces to agitate her and to cause the marriage to flounder. Husbands, we are commanded to *love our wives the way Messiah loves the Congregation of Believers*, that is, the *Body of Messiah*. However, the *Body that Yeshua* loves is actually full of *wrinkles and spots*. Yet it says that by loving the *Bride Body*, those wrinkles and spots will be eliminated and He will be able to present her to Himself without spots or wrinkles.

Similarly wives, the Bible says that wives should *respect* (*submit*) not just to obedient husbands only. Why? Because the Bible says (not psychology) that those husbands will be *won over by their wives conduct*. People say, but rabbi, that doesn't make any sense and it doesn't. The wisdom of God is foolishness to men. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. It doesn't have to make sense. When it makes sense, the best you can do is to hope for what psychology gives you as the highest price – you can *cope* with it. Praise God that the word *coping* does not appear, (not once) in the Bible. The word you do find in Scripture is *OVERCOME*. The *Good News* is that we can declare to the evil forces that are trying to destroy your marriage that they are subject to *Yeshua*. If we *"humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God"* (*1 Peter 5:6-7*) and *"resist the devil,"* (*James 4:7*) the Bible says *"he will flee"* and your marriage will be safe.

Why is it that God tell husbands *to love their wives* and wives *to respect their husbands*? Most men don't care so much for love they care for respect. We do not expect to get to work and the secretaries say: *we love we love you!* That would be totally embarrassing to a man. We don't want to be loved that way. But when somebody says: *Dr. Arroyo, I respect you so much and it is a great honor for me to work for you*, that does something inside me. If someone tells me they love me because of the way I conduct my business, I am dumbfounded. But when I hear echoes that people think I am an *honorable* person and that I am *respected*, then I can't help but feel good. Why is that? Because according to *Peter* we have inherited a futile lifestyle (worthless way of life) from our forefathers (*1 Peter 1:18*) – futile in that it can never satisfy. We are conceived in sin by sinful people, are born into a sinful world and are raised in a sinful society. The stack is loaded against us and we cannot win. In order to *cope* and to deal with all the frustration and futility of life, the world focuses on *making it big*. The biggest car, the biggest bank account, the biggest house, the most expensive dress, and the biggest business – these are the things the world wants. Why? It gives a false sense (yet it is real to many who

have these things) of security. Bringing that over to the believing community, *when a wife respects her husband and builds him through honest praise, she is giving that man the only thing that he really cares about.*

In closing, I want to emphasize a promise attached to the command: *Yah Adonai* said to women if you want to win your husbands don't cook the best meals, or don't do this or that, *just respect him*. Men need respect in order to succeed. That is why so many men after giving their lives to their jobs, when they retire, they get deeply depressed and many commit suicide. Some develop cancers and die quickly because now there is no more hope and they are relegated to the reality of no one praising them. This is why this is such a powerful promise. *When a man is respected and honored by the one somebody with whom he is one flesh, there is no limit to it.* Ladies, for those of you that are not married yet, treasure this in your heart. And if you begin early in your relationship (even on the first day of your marriage) to praise when there are not so many negatives in the picture, is amazing how *far your husband will go to love and honor you. Shabbat Shalom!*