

Is Marriage a 50/50 Proposition?

Ron Roberts

Many people have said it. "Marriage is a 50/50 proposition." But is it really? The statement suggests an equal partnership. Equal in labor, benefits, responsibilities, and authority. Try to imagine how that would work.

The husband works from 9 to 5 at the office. Therefore the wife works from 9 to 5 in the home. She does the cooking, cleaning, laundry, accounting, childcare, and so on from 9 to 5. He gets paid for his job, but she does not. Therefore he splits his check right down the middle. She gets half in their 50/50 arrangement. Each partner should have their own checkbook and their own assigned bills to pay. So far so good???

If the husband wants breakfast before he goes to work he will have to pay his wife extra. She does not begin work until 9. If a child needs help with eating, or dressing, or getting on the school bus he is on his own. She does not start work until 9. If the husband wants supper after he returns home he will have to make a trade to keep things 50/50. She can cook and he will clean up after. Or she can do all the supper work and he will do repair projects around the house to cover the same amount of time.

What happens when the husband loses his job and no longer works 9 to 5? Is the wife free to quit her work as well? Does he now need to take on half of the household chores until he finds another job? If the wife gets sick and cannot perform her duties, does she owe him a sick day or some medical leave?

There is no doubt there is some give and take in marriage. There is sharing. No one should enter this union feeling they are entitled to all the benefits while their partner must take care of all the burdens. Did he marry for better and she married for worse? Is she made richer while he is made poorer by this union?

Let us consider the word of God. It is the marriage manual. God created the man, the woman, and the marriage. He knows what is best for all three. God made three great institutions. The church, the government, and the home. The home was his first design, and its collapse adversely impacts the other two.

Titus 2:4-5 instructs the older godly women to teach the younger women to fulfill their roles. *That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that **the word of God be not blasphemed**.*

Of particular interest in today's environment is the assignment to be *obedient to husbands* and to be *keepers at home*. The feminist revolts at the thought of the husband being in charge and the wife being restricted to domestic duties. A woman can work outside the home once her responsibilities in the home are met. The liberal woman feels the 50/50 arrangement should allow her to have a career, him to share in the housework, and each to have equal power in all decisions that are made. But Paul tells us in Eph 5:22-23, "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*"

The husband has a God given roles as well. He is to provide for the family. This includes financial, spiritual, and emotional support. He is to be the supplier. 1 Tim 5:8 *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is **worse than an infidel**.*

Notice how these assignments are tied to our faith in Jesus. If a woman does not submit *she causes the word of God to be blasphemed*. If a man does not provide he is *worse than an*

infidel (someone without faith). This connection between our faith and family is noted again in 1 Pet. 3:7, "*Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*" The Holy Spirit is not interested in social norms, psychology, or modern trends. His instructions for marriage are so we can be successful in our homes and give God the glory. Our happiness is due to following His pattern and not the world's.

Eph 5:25 commands, "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*" The husband's example of love is **Jesus**. As Christ gave everything for the church, so the husband is to sacrifice all for his wife. If this was done properly I doubt feminism would ever get a foothold in our Christian homes. If a wife was truly loved she would not be bothered by her role of submission. It is the selfishness of the man that promotes the wife's thinking that she has her rights! When she is nurtured and protected she will not seek independence and authority. She will not be measuring how much she has given up for him in contrast to how little she has received from him. Do true Christians ever complain that Jesus should have done more for them? If the husband fulfills God's role to the degree of his example then his wife will be pleased.

If we would look at our marriage as a 100 percent operation then we would do much better. In regards to the sexual relationship Paul tells us the wife's body belongs to her husband and his body belongs to her (1 Cor. 7:4). Each one has no right to refuse their partner's needs. Your body is your partner's property, 100 percent. We need to **give** to make the marriages fulfilling. When we selfishly pursue our own happiness, demand our rights, and focus on our contributions; we will end up miserable. When we try to give everything to benefit our mate (as God has) then we will find the fulfillment God intended us to have when we unite in marriage.