

MAGAZINE INSIGHTS 6: A HUSBAND'S CHARGE

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, to make her holy... (Ephesians 5:25-26, NIV)

IT IS PROBABLY BEST TO LEAVE MOST GOLF JOKES in the rubbish bin of humor. This may be especially true when it comes to those that mix marriage and golf, as with the golfer who paid his respects by tipping his golf cap to a passing funeral, then turned to his playing partners to say, "I'll sure miss her." Oops. Sorry.

The old Christian pastor and writer A.W. Tozer once noted that one of the measures of whether we are engaging in Christ-honoring character is what makes us laugh. If we are not to engage in unwholesome talk, should we listen to it with merriment? It's a good question, though it's not our principal theme of the day.

A greater theme we might take up is this: Whether or not we deem the little joke above as coarse jesting, it is jesting indeed, and it makes light of something holy, in this case the beautiful institution of marriage, created and beloved by the Father. It is no honorable thing to turn a sacred thing into something common. And yet, that too only brushes up against our determined theme.

So what is that theme? It is this beautiful institution and our obligation to it, especially as husbands.

We do take up this matter somewhat apologetically, for so many readers of these devotions are women. But because that number is similar to the 20 percent of golfers who are women, once in a while we need to target our majority audience—especially when the Scripture aims its words at men specifically, and in this case husbands. And especially when the context of our present series, which includes the life of astronaut Charlie Duke as told in the Links Players Magazine, leads us there.

You see, after Charlie Duke climbed down the wrong ladder and started living for the things the Lord would have of him, his entire relationship with his wife Doty changed. In fact, when Charlie came across today's passage, he felt as though God was sending him a direct message: "The problem with your marriage is you." He repented. "God was judging my heart," Charlie says. "So I responded positively. I didn't reject it, I didn't fight it, I knew it was true."

What's true for you? Are you a man loving his wife as Christ loved the church? Consider what this means and take this as your charge to be that kind of lover.

Opening questions What are two or three traits of a couple whose marriage you truly respect? What is your level of comfort with assessing the effort and excellence of your marriage?

READING Mark 10:1-12; Ephesians 5:25-33; Proverbs 31:10-31

Jesus and marriage (Mark 10)

What are the marks of a right marriage in Jesus' eyes? What source material did he draw from? How might a man be guilty of separating what God has brought together?

The role of a husband (Ephesians 5)

According to this passage, how does a Christian man go about loving his wife? In what ways is Christ his example?

An excellent wife (Proverbs 31)

If you were to write an ode to your own wife, what traits would you emphasize? How might you creatively affirm these traits in your wife?
