

# Job 31: Living With Integrity

Adapted from a series of studies by Brian Haines



## Job 31:9-15

### Fidelity in Marriage

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. Ephesians 5:25-30*

It seems almost as though Job returns here to his first point on the issue of lust. Let us say that the difference between this point and the first is key to identifying the core issue here. In his first statement Job identified his integrity in not lusting, an offense (against God and) against whatever woman he looked at lustfully. Now he is making the case that he owes something to his wife. In particular, he makes the point to identify his wife as an equal in the eyes of God, pointing to her being formed in the womb.

Job's point then sounds very much like the one found in the New Testament. Peter said this: *"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."* (1 Peter 3:7).

Perhaps we might consider the point Job and Peter are making here is much like the one saying that you have married God's daughter; how will she report your conduct? Having the powerful Father-in Law is the terror of many a young man; do we consider that this is precisely the point that Peter and Job are revealing?

How is it that we then perfect integrity by our conduct in marriage? Job's superficial point is to be clear he has been physically/sexually faithful to his wife. His direction to the idea of *"playing with fire"* reminds us of the words of the Proverb writer (Proverbs 6:27).



### **Dwell With Understanding**

But it is deeper than this, if we compare this to Peter's statement. Peter said we are to "*dwell with understanding*". This means we are forced to "educate" ourselves to being pleasing spouses. He says to consider them as the weaker vessels, a statement we might consider as being the description of a fragile, delicate object that we might place carefully in a place of honor.

As Christians, we need to be understanding that our conduct in marriage is a matter of judgment. "*That your prayers may not be hindered*" is a subtle warning that if you fail your marriage, you fail God. It reminds us of the adage that "if you make my daughter cry, I will make you cry". God makes the same threat.

### **When Men Fail**

In summation, it is not just adultery that causes a marriage to fail. It is not living up to the expectation of being the proper type of husband. When men are selfish, unspiritual, boastful, violent, or simply worldly, they will fail to be the husband that God commands.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. What does it mean for a husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church? Is this possible?
2. In many cultures men are given more social leeway to be lustful than women. What is Job's point that invalidates any distinction between the faithfulness of a husband or of a wife? What part might humility play in this mindset?
3. How do Godly men fall into adulterous relationships? What things do men do that lead them astray without intending to fall?
4. Considering different ways that people can be worldly, list some specific things men do that cause them to fail to be the husbands that God expects
5. What are some practical things married people can do to avoid infidelity?