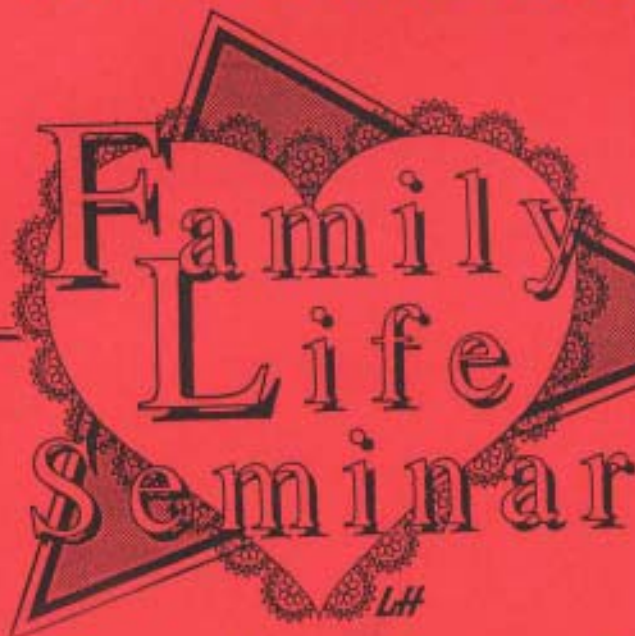


# Salubrity Seminars



## God's Design for Husbands

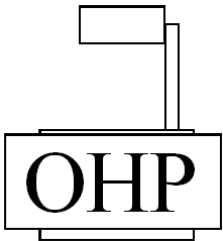
Original text 1979 (Flannelgraph),  
Updated 1986 (Overhead Transparencies)  
This revised edition 1998  
©Copyright, Lionel Hartley

Salubrity  
Seminars

Lionel Hartley  
& Associates



## God's Design for Husbands



Ice breaker: A number of Australasian wives were asked this question: “What is a husband?”

Here are some of their replies:

“A husband is someone who wakes you when the baby is crying”

“A husband is someone who ’phones you from the office to ask you the number of his car which is parked outside the office, and then he says, ‘Thanks, son’!”

“A husband is someone who tells you (passionately) that he loves you and then announces that he has burnt (a cigarette) hole in your best tablecloth!”

“A husband is someone who, when we wake in the morning, turns to me and whispers, “Do you love me? (You

do?), Good. Then go and make me a cuppa tea!””

“A husband is someone who when you rant and rave and let off steam in front of him he can look up from his newspaper and say, ‘Did you say something, dear?’”

“A husband is an escort waiting in brilliant blue shirt, iridescent pink tie, brown trousers, bright green socks and slippers.”

“A husband is someone who hangs around hungrily when a meal is being cooked - then disappears when it is served.”

“A husband is someone who keeps all other nuisances away, but remains the biggest nuisance.”

Adapted from “What  
Is A Husband?”,  
Editorial Staff, Angus  
& Robertson,  
Australia 1978, p8

If that's what a husband is, then what

is the ideal Husband?

In our study today we will consider the various sides of the ideal husband's character: the strength of the spirit, the steadfastness of the will and the consistency of the character.

Tempered steel, as used in car springs, is a common commodity that combines the properties of toughness and flexibility. The authors Hugh and Rosemary Thompson in their book “Fulfillment in Marriage” bring to our attention that the fact that tempered steel aptly illustrates the ‘gentle strength’ of a godly husband.



OHP - The Man of Steel

a) The strength of the spirit

The ideal husband is first and foremost a man! But what is a real

man?

History tell us that two captured kings of Midian made an instructive observation on the subject of that great historical figure, Gideon. They were protesting that Gideon had given his eldest son the gory task of executing them. He was a youth and lacked the hallmark of a true man — strength of spirit.



The historical record says,

“Turning to Jether, his oldest son, [Gideon] said, ‘Kill them!’ But Jether did not draw his sword, because he was only a boy and was afraid.

Zebah and Zalmunna [(the two captured kings of Midian)] said, ‘Come, do it yourself. “as is the man, so is his strength.”’ So Gideon stepped forward and killed them.” (Judges 8:20,21 NIV)

That statement, “As is the man, so is his strength.”, was neither a slip of the tongue nor a piece of pagan philosophy.

On his deathbed, the Israeli King David told his son, Prince Jonathon, that strength of spirit was an indispensable feature of manhood:

“‘I am about to go the way of all the earth,’ he said, ‘So be strong, show yourself a man.’” (1 Kings 2:2 NIV)

It is strength of spirit that separates the men from the boys. We refer, however, not to brute force, but to an internal fruit of the Divine Spirit. Such strength is born out of brokenness and bred through pressures and self-discipline.

For instance, history tells us that the Patriarch Jacob was naturally strong in wit and in body. But his God took him in hand to change all that by conquering Jacob and (Quote) “caused him to limp.” (Genesis 32:25).

After that, Jacob lived up to his new princely name of Israel, which means ‘The Prince of God’.

In his resulting weakness, he manifested a new strength of character.

It wasn't the naturally strong Moses, killer of an Egyptian taskmaster, whom his God used to liberate his people. The record tells us that only as Moses felt most inadequate, did his God strengthen him inwardly and commission him to set the Israelis free.

Both Jacob and Moses could have appropriated that little expression that appeared centuries later in Psalm 102:23 “He weakened my strength in the way”.

They could have also made St Paul's testimony their own when he said, “When I am weak, then I am strong.”

He explained in a letter written to a city church in Greece (2 Corinthians 12:1-10) how he experienced repeated satanic insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties.

He saw these attacks as demonic punch-ups.

Actually the word he used in the Greek was ‘*kolaphidzo*’ which literally means ‘to strike with a clenched fist’.

Yet all this was designed by his God

(Reference:  
‘torment’ in 2  
Corinthians 12:7)



to prevent him from bragging about some amazing revelations he had received some fourteen years before.

He records, in his letter, that the Lord had turned down his request for a reprieve from this constant hassle, explaining: “‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore [Paul resolves] I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that [His] power may rest upon me. That is why ‘I delight in weakness.’ for when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9,10)

The husband who continually moans about life's difficulties has little or no strength of spirit.

Nor does the one who blusters his

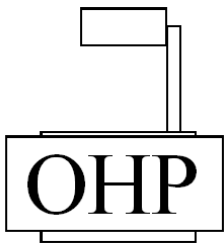
way through the pressures — his strength is natural forcefulness only.

For our friend Egbert to be the husband of a wonderfully radiant prima donna wife (we will be talking about her in our next seminar programme, God's Design for Wives), - to be the husband of a prima donna wife, Egbert does not need to be a 'Crocodile Dundee', a macho trouble-shooter, or a Mr Universe with rippling muscles.

Goethe reckoned: "You cannot always be a hero but you can always be a man."

However, if 'being a man' means appropriating Divine grace to be strong

in spirit, so that “When I am weak, then I am strong”, it follows that, by aligning ourselves with the Divine, every husband can always be an ideal husband.



## b) The Steadfastness of the will

### 1. He takes the initiative.

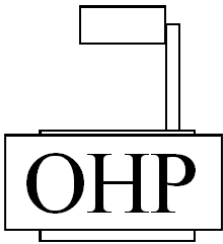
How's this for a beatitude: Happy is the wife who doesn't have to prompt her husband with ideas and plans for the family's welfare and pleasure.

In the ancient love poem, *The Song of Songs*, it is the bridegroom who initiates each fresh move: Quote: “The King has brought me into his chambers”; “Arise, come my darling with me.”; “Come with me from Lebanon, my bride.”; “Open to me my

darling”; etcetera. (Song of Solomon 1:4; 2:13; 4:8; & 5:2)

Of course, because the bride is no mere puppet, she too feels free to express her wishes to her man, sometimes before he has time to show initiative: Quote: “Take me away with you” (Song of Solomon 1:4) is an appeal to him to take the initiative (The Jerusalem transcript renders this phrase in the ancient poem as “Draw me in your footsteps.”).

In fact, in the poem she usually presents her ideas to him as ‘suggestions’ using the ‘let us’ formula. For example she says, “let us hurry”; “Let my lover come into his garden”; “Let us go into the countryside.” (Song of Solomon 1:4; 4:16; & 7:11)



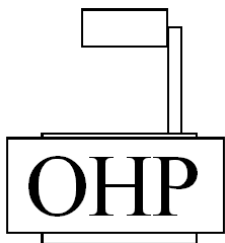
## 2. He acts decisively

Decisiveness is not impulsiveness.

“We'll wait and see; let me think it over.” can be a wise decision, especially if the ideal husband does not yet register the peace of God in his heart about a particular course of action.

But letting things drift is not good ideal-husbanding.

It is better to make a bad decision out of a genuine motivation, and learn from your mistake, than not to decide at all.



## 3. He holds convictions.

Peter Marshall in his book ‘Mr. Jones, Meet the Master’ got it right when it announced, “If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything”

The 'Man of Steel' is no chameleon, changing his views on essential issues according to the company he is with.

Of course, fashions in clothes, hairstyles, music, and so forth are fluid and unimportant; opinions on such things can change. “(These are things which) go in one year and out the other.” (People Magazine 23/12/92 p70)

Convictions are something else.

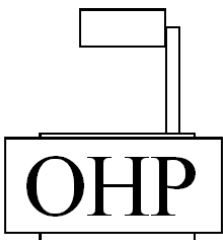
As someone has put it, “I'll fight for my opinions, but I'd 'die' for my convictions!”

Is there a conviction you need to make today to register the peace of God in your heart and become God's ideal person?

Quote, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the Hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” Written by St Peter when corresponding to church people in the area around Yugoslavia. (1 Peter 3:15 NIV)

However, forcing one's opinions on others is not true steel, but pig-iron!  
Male chauvinist pig-iron.

The ideal husband leaves ‘tiptoe’ing ‘through the tulips’ to Tiny Tim. A man's will and spirit show in his physical appearance and movements.



c) The consistency of the character

1. He is confident in the Source of his strength

Instead of pouring out words of doubt and fear on his wife and children, the ideal husband testifies that, however life's circumstances may fluctuate, he can say, as did St Paul, “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:12,13)



Here we come to St Paul's secret that I really must share with you, because I can personally vouch for the fact that it is absolutely true.

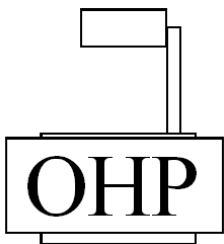
The ideal husband acknowledges that apart from God he cannot realise his true potential as a husband.

And, like a good general, he refrains from voicing his misgivings to the troops.



He lives by faith, therefore he voices his confidence.

Because you desire to be an ideal husband you will have already acknowledged that, without faith beyond yourself, then fulfilment is only a dream.



2. He is reliable, fair, unselfish, honest and pure

Likewise, without faith beyond himself, the ideal husband will have difficulty not just displaying but living reliability, fairness, unselfishness, honesty and purity.

The ideal husband, living with God's help, has a family that knows that he is dependable in how he handles money, popularity, leisure time.

They can trust his morality in the realm of sex.

It's worth considering tapping into the power that God offers.

The Ideal husband is a man of tempered steel.

Unlike some brittle steels, spring steel is flexible.



When we look at the ideal husband we find that:

3. He is Humble.

He learns from the successful business executive.

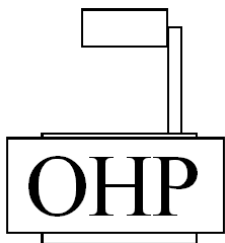
The ideal husband does not grovel to people yet is devoid of arrogance.

Like the successful executive, he is amenable to counsel, and listens to advice.

In the multi-million-dollar Amway industry motivational presentations,

over and over again it is reinforced that real success comes to those who surround themselves with advisers who understand business better than they do.

When the ideal husband has made a mistake, he admits it and seeks forgiveness from both God and man. He is one of those who receive God's abundant provision of grace to reign in life (Romans 5:17).



Maggie finds it hard understanding those three magic words, “I love you” while waiting for those three other magic words, “Please forgive me!”

The spirit of forgiveness pays off.

Did you know that Australia was once at war with the United States?

The Americans declared war with the British Empire in 1812 because Britain's blockade of Napoleon's Europe was seriously affecting US trade.

The worst incident affecting Australia occurred in 1815. An American privateer vessel attacked the convict transport vessel “Francis and Eliza” in the Atlantic Ocean, taking all their ammunition.

In 1865, during the American Civil War, the Confederate raider “Shanandoah” docked in Melbourne for repairs.

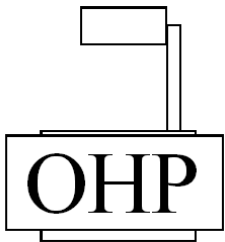
A dispute about recruitment of local seamen ended after the captain threatened to turn his guns on the town.

Britain later received a large bill for Union ships sunk by the “Shanandoah”.

(Australian Post 22/  
2/92 p38)

But all was forgiven and forgotten by 1908 when Australians greeted the US White Fleet with great enthusiasm.

Looking at the Ideal husband, we find that:



#### 4. He is Gentle

1 Peter 3:7 (NIV) reads,  
“Husbands... be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

How is the ideal husband gentle towards his wife?



1) The ideal husband is gentle towards his wife when he is sensitive to her needs.

The NASB the rendering of  
“considerate” in 1 Peter 3:7:  
“Husbands... be considerate as you live  
with your wives...” is “understanding”.

(New Woman, Jan  
1990 p27)

The good husband may not fully  
understand his wife - the actor Vincent  
Price said that women are like modern-  
art paintings which can never be  
enjoyed if you try to understand them.

However, the ideal husband can  
understand that the person under  
authority is the weaker partner in a  
relationship whether it is the employee  
of a boss, the subject of a sovereign,  
the child of a parent or the wife of a  
husband.

Bearing in mind her subordinate  
rôle, he doesn't just provide living and  
loving, he shares his life, his all.

She married him, not his pay cheque.

To be understanding, to be considerate, he makes himself aware of her concerns, fears, disappointments, inner wounds, her expectations, aspirations and dreams.

His shoulder is of more value to her than his tongue!

“God gave us two ears for active listening, two eyes for sharing a tear, two shoulders for comforting, two arms for loving, but only one mouth.”

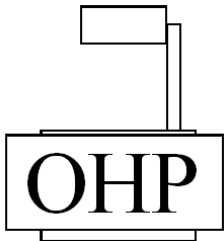
(Lionel Hartley, Rules for Fighting, 1988)

2) The ideal husband gentle towards his wife when he honours her

Maggie complained to a counsellor that Egbert was very good at honour because he was always on her back to do things or always on her back over

things she hadn't done. The counsellor explained that the opposite of honour is offer - To honour, keep off her.

How does the ideal husband honour her? - he treats her like a queen - for she is his queen, “heirs with you of the gracious gift of life” 1 Peter 3:7



3) The ideal husband is gentle towards his wife when he cherishes her (Ephesians 5:29)

He has trained himself in the simple art of romance. We will talk of this in more detail in programme number eleven.

Romance is silly poems...

An 1800's Valentines Card read:  
“Love has come and made a capture,  
Half ‘tis pain and half ‘tis rapture’

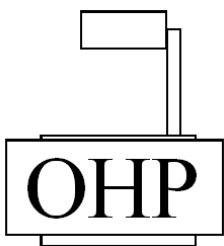


You alone can ease the smart,  
Bind my wounds and heal my heart.”

Romance is flowers and gifts when it is not St Valentine's day, not her birthday, not an anniversary or not only when seeking forgiveness or reconciliation.

Romance is unexpected love notes and phone calls.

Romance is spending time together, helping with the housework, and especially praise and reassurance.



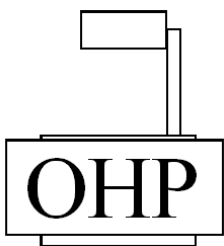
4) The ideal husband is gentle towards his wife when he submits to her

Ephesians 5:22, we all know the verse, says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands...” But did you

know the preceding verse, verse 21 says, “Submitting yourselves to one another”?

1 Corinthians 7:4 says, “The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.”

Don't be embarrassed, but these verses in 1 Corinthians 7 are talking about sex. But that can wait until our seminar programme “Created Sexual” too.



5) The ideal husband is gentle towards his wife when he is merciful

“And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”  
(Matthew 6:12)

The ideal husband makes allowances for his wife's mistakes and deficiencies, knowing that God does the same for him in regard to his own.

In the book “Stop Marital Fights Before They Start”, authors Norman Lobsenz and Fred P. Percy tell us that, “...forgiveness really works.”

When they are asked, “Can a relationship be saved?” they respond, “No, but you can build a new relationship and forgiveness allows the process to begin.

We may feel we are admitting defeat when we do the forgiving, but on the contrary, as the saying goes - ‘the one who forgives gains the victory’.

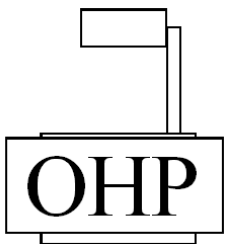
Forgiveness involves letting go of anger, restoring respect and offering

acceptance.

If you can find a way to offer the gift of forgiveness, you will have discovered one of the strongest circuit breakers of all, one that allows you to put down the burden you're carrying.

With your hands and heart free, you and your partner can begin building a new, more fulfilling relationship.”

(Berkley Publishing  
Group NY 1994 -  
Cited in The  
Reader's Digest Feb  
1995 p64)



6) The ideal husband gentle towards his wife when he is faithful

A schoolgirl wrote in a essay on the ten commandments that, quote, “It is wrong to commit adultery because it breaks the vase you took when you were married.” But there is more to being faithful than honouring vows.

(For those jotting down Biblical

references, the advice for faithfulness is found in Proverbs 5:15-19.)

A British survey asked men their preferred choice for a weekend of the delights of sex. Film actress Kim Basinger, flamboyant singer Madonna, Page-3 nude model Sam Fox or their wife. The result? three out of four, that's 75%, voted for their wives.

A really strong case for fidelity comes from Chryssa Dobson who said, “Really good sex only comes when you grow sensitive enough to another person to know what pleases him or her both in and out of bed... a skill hardly likely to be developed overnight.

(Cited in Naura Hayden, ‘Everything you wanted to know about ENERGY But were too weak to ask’ Gulf & Western, NY 1977 p80)

You can't learn to play a musical instrument in a day; what horror to imagine trying to learn a different

instrument each afternoon.”



7) The ideal husband is gentle towards his wife when he is considerate.

The Phillips translation of 1 Corinthians 13:5 renders the KJV text, “Doth not behave unseemly” to a simple, “Love has good manners.”

We have said that the man of tempered steel, the ideal husband is confident, reliable, fair, unselfish, honest, pure, humble and gentle.



Now we see that he is:

5. Sacrificial.

Helen Rowland said “In olden times sacrifices were made at the altar, a

practice which still continues”.

Caroline Fry said, “The strongest evidence of love is sacrifice”.

Ephesians 5: 25 says, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.”

When the ideal husband gives up pleasures and privileges for her welfare he doesn't go on reminding her of it!

The ideal husband has responsibilities too. These are to protect, to provide, to teach and to guide. In our next programme will delve into these rôles more fully.

## Group Activity: The Ideal Husband.

See handouts