

# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## Husbands and Happiness

Husbands generally have a more difficult time making the adjustment to married life than their wives. But those who invest the time and effort to make that adjustment will not regret it.

“When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken” (Deut. 24:5).

To appreciate the significance of this law, let’s do a little math. When Israel first came into the land of Canaan, their army consisted of roughly 600,000 men from twenty years old and up (Num. 26:51). Assuming an even distribution of ages, those of marrying age (20-30) would constitute about a third of that number (200,000). In any given year, if just one percent of that number got married, that means the army would be deprived of the services of 2,000 young men of prime fighting age. These assumptions can be adjusted up or down, of course, but it’s safe to say that in order to comply with this injunction, Israel’s army had the equivalent of a small regiment out of commission *every year*. That’s quite a hit on an army’s fighting strength.

Yet God insisted that Israel’s army make that sacrifice. Why? The obvious

reason is because a strong home is the foundation of a strong nation. By giving a new husband an exemption from all civic obligations for one year, the nation would lose the services of a young man, yes; but they would gain a strong, stable young family, an institution whose contributions to the nation’s well-being over its lifetime would more than compensate for that one year’s loss.

But there is a second lesson in this law that deserves our attention. Notice that God places the primary responsibility for marital happiness on the *husband*, not the wife. It was the husband’s duty to “bring happiness to his wife,” not the other way around. Certainly wives have responsibilities in marriage, too, but especially in the beginning of a marriage, it is the husband who must take the lead in establishing a climate of happiness and joy in the relationship.

This distinction speaks volumes about unique gender roles in marriage. Unlike men, women are complex creatures—for a variety of perfectly valid reasons—and it usually takes men a while to figure that out. Women’s prior-

ities in a relationship are quite different from men’s; how they process information is different; their emotional makeup, sexual desire, and physical strengths are all quite different from men. Notice, I did not say *defective*, but *different*. Those differences are there for a reason, and it is a wise man who accepts them and learns how to live with them. Hence, God’s message to the new husband: Stay close to home, fella, and take the time to learn how to make your wife happy.

It might seem unfair to place the burden of adjustment on the husband, but there is a perfectly reasonable principle in play here. It is much easier for a wife to fulfill her role as a supportive companion to her husband when she is responding to the leadership of a man who is going out of his way to respond to her needs. By taking the initiative to study and adapt to his wife, a man not only learns a lot about this strange and wonderful creature he has chosen to spend the rest of his life with, he also sets the tone for how his home will function. By making his wife happy, *he* will be happy, too.

– David King