

Applications of CHELM

By Ian Ridpath

CHELM stands for **Cherish, Honour, Encourage, Love and Minister**.

These are five aspects of building up and living out a deep relationship with my Spouse. How do I do this for her?

1) Show **GRATITUDE**:

[1 Thessalonians 5:18]

¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

I certainly do not give thanks in all circumstances. I may give thanks to God for big things such as food, shelter, clothing and my wife and family but I do not thank her nearly enough for the other things like being my wife in the first place, for being a helpmate, for being willing to put up with me and my foibles or even things like wanting to do things together and not getting upset at some of my quirks.

Thankfulness is a gift of grace from God and must be heartfelt and genuine. It is not a bad habit to be continuously thankful for big and trivial things. I must keep my eyes, ears, and heart open to things that I can be thankful for.

[Colossians 3:15]

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Thank God first but thank my wife next in ALL that she does, especially for the sake of the Kingdom but also for the day-to-day things like being in the Word, wanting to make dinner, or wanting to be closer to me.

She and I are members of ONE BODY, Christ, and so should be thankful for each other and for Him and express this every day.

2) Be **CONSIDERATE**:

[Philippians 2:3]

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

Being considerate makes sure I consider her needs and desires before mine. This can show up in wanting to do a certain activity, go out, stay in and watch a program, study the Word together and more. This can be hard and is often an indication of selfish ambition or pride. I must break this by listening to her desires and not dismissing them out of hand.

3) Be **GENTLE**:

[Proverbs 15:4]

The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

How often has my tongue dripped with acid instead of sweetness? Gentleness is not only physical but emotional as well. I must guard my tongue whenever I am speaking to my wife and indeed anyone else. I am to listen without forming a retaliatory reply, I must consider her as the gentle, loving wife that God has given me and when I do, I will not speak harshly or treat her harshly.

[Philippians 4:5]

⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Again, my behaviour speaks volumes about my heart. When my heart is unsettled or 'sick', I must never let that affect my gentleness towards her. Even when I am weary or not feeling the best, I must curb my propensity to be selfish and fail to treat her as I would want to be treated.

4) Be **KIND**:

[Ephesians 4:32]

³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

How many times have I not done this? Kindness and Gentleness are cousins and go hand in hand. Kindness though holds a higher status in that I have no excuse not to be kind not only to my wife but to others as well. Being kind often means bringing the truth into a situation and even admonishing in a gentle loving manner. So, I believe I cannot just be kind but also gentle in my kindness. This may mean holding my tongue if it is not going to help the situation but when I do speak to speak in love and tenderness... this is being kind.

[Colossians 3:12]

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

These five terms are, as was kindness and gentleness expressed in Ephesians 4:32, cousins and often are tied together in a situation that I find myself in areas of how I treat my wife. Patience must precede the rest in that if I am not patient then I cannot suitably express compassion, kindness, humility and gentleness. I clothe myself in these attributes when I seek God first. I cannot be like Him in all these areas and yet treat her in opposite ways. Practically, patience is born-out by listening more than taking and being available for her instead of for myself and desiring to help her meet her needs instead of mine.

5) Be PATIENT:

[Ephesians 4:2]

² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

As expressed in 3) and 4), patience must precede many other interactions. The idea of 'bearing with one another' is often secondary in my actions. I have often thought that 'bearing' with my wife means that I have to put up with everything and have no say myself. This wrong thinking had led to many conflicts. Bearing with one another does not mean being a door mat or having no ideas of my own but seeking her best and accepting her thinking and ideas without feeling intimidated. This is best expressed by listening more and talking less and listening with a gentle and humble spirit. This can be practiced often even in little decisions or desires that she may have.

[1 Corinthians 13:4]

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

Ditto [Ephesians 4:2] with the added note that it is MY PRIDE that often stops me being the kind, gentle, humble and compassionate husband that I am called to be in Christ. I must KILL my pride at every opportunity by going to God first and often before speaking or acting.

[Ecclesiastes 7:9]

⁹ Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

How often do I take offense at something my wife says or does? Taking offense leads me to provocation in my spirit and anger is not far behind. Again, I must allow the Holy Spirit to direct my hearing and reacting with fruit such as the Fruit of the Spirit tells me... be loving, be joyful, be peaceful, be patient, be kind, be gentle, be faithful, be gentle and be self-controlled in ALL circumstances. This is a practice skill and learned through many trials that the Spirit will take me through until I finally am free from provocation and anger.

6) Be GOOD:

[Ephesians 4:32]

³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

(See notes on 4 above)

[Romans 12:9]

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

I must love my wife and express that to her in word and deed. Everyone has a different 'love language' and I must be in tune with hers and act accordingly.

[2 Peter 1: 5-7]

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control,

perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

This is a wonderful progression of going from faith in God to love for my wife. My faith must be expressed in such love. I know this list of Peter's is meant for the church both corporately and individually. It includes elements of most of the previous verses. I must demonstrate my faith by being in the word, praying with her on every occasion and letting my godliness be evident in my walk and talk. I can do this by being patient and listening intently and with purpose to her.

7) Be SELF CONTROLLED:

[Titus 2: 11-12]

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

I really need the help of the Holy Spirit to control my thoughts and my tongue. I need to be much slower to speak and much quicker to listen to my wife.

[2 Timothy 1:7]

⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

The self-discipline part is hard for someone who has generally had their way all their life. Self-discipline in my alone times to avoid wasting time on my phone or computer looking at news and games.

[James 1: 19-20]

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

See note on Titus 2:11-12... my human anger is often displayed overtly and covertly as I murmur and lose patience with my wife. I am not quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to get angry... quite the opposite. Lord, show me in every instance when I am prone to that. Let me purposefully take it to the Lord in prayer.

8) Be a MINISTER:

[2 Timothy 2:15]

¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

I find it interesting that I am able to 'minister' to others more easily than to my wife. I try to handle the Word of Truth well but sometimes I forget and insert my own take on the Word. Lord, let me always go the Word first and then apply the Word in the situation. I must present myself to God as one approved but also to my wife as someone who lives according to the Spirit and the Word. Again, let me be quick to listen and slow to talk and become angry. There are so many daily, mini situations where I must practice this as one approved by God.

[2 Corinthians 5:18]

¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

I know I am reconciled to God through Christ but let me also be reconciled with my wife and others.

[2 Corinthians 6: 3]

³ We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

How many times have I put a stumbling block in her way by my words, actions and attitude? Because I have not honoured her to the degree I should, I know my prayers have been hindered (1 Peter 3:7). Stumbling blocks could be things like a certain look or attitude or demeanor when some subjects are mentioned... these cause her to not want to share with me. I must listen first then ask the Holy Spirit for how I should respond and do it quickly.

[Ephesians 4:11-12]

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

I may not be an appointed apostle or prophet or evangelist or teacher, but the Holy Spirit has appointed me to love my wife and honour her and treat her as Christ would... in other words, to build her up. I can do this by coming alongside her in her times of need, in times when she wants and needs prayer and times of bringing the Word to her in every circumstance. I can only minister to her if I have been in the Word and desire to share the Word with her.

[James 4:10]

¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Humility is the antidote for pride. I miss so many opportunities to minister to my wife because of my pride. "I know better," or "I can fix this" and such statements are a clear indication of my pride. Lord, help me get rid of my pride and in humility serve her by ministering to her needs... daily needs of increased faith, closeness to God, closeness to me and her desire to be the best daughter of the Most High. Let me be insightful to these needs and address them immediately.

[Colossians 3:16]

¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

This is one of the most practical verses on how to react with other saints, especially our spouses. It begins with having the Word firmly established and rooted in me. I cannot minister if I do not have a close relationship with Jesus and let His word dwell in me richly and continually. I am called to teach and admonish in wisdom and love and I cannot do this unless I have let the Holy Spirit have free reign in my heart. I cannot recall ever singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs over my wife but by this passage I am called to do that. I have infrequently serenaded her with Praise and Worship songs by playing my guitar. I need to do that more.