

Husbands, Love Your Wives

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Ephesians chapter five, if you would. Again we are going to talk about marriage tonight. What I wanted to say is God requires leadership. God has made us and God has required us, as men, to be the head of our home. And we are to exhibit leadership in spiritual areas. We are to exhibit leadership in physical areas. We are to exhibit leadership all around. And that leadership is through the headship of Jesus Christ. It is not a...

Listen. You can't be the loose cannon husband where you are out, you know, well, I know what to do and I know how to do it. No, you need to have God's leadership and God's wisdom and God's direction.

In fact, go—keep your finger there in Ephesians five—but go to 1 Corinthians 11. And we looked at this a couple of weeks back, but I wanted to just point this out again. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse number three, the Bible says, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ.”¹

Can I ask you a question tonight, men? Whether you are married or not, who is your head? Who is your leadership? It better be the Lord Jesus Christ. It can't be you. I can't be what you think is right. It has got to be, ok, you know what? I want Jesus to lead me. I want God to lead me. I need God's help. I need his wisdom. And that had better be what you are praying every day.

Brother Josh, it had better be when you get up in the morning praying, “God, give me wisdom today as a man to make the right decision.”

Brother Orlando, “God, give me wisdom today. Lord, I want you to be the head of my life. I have tried it with Orlando as the head of my life. It doesn't work.”

I have tried it as pastor Teesdale is the head. It makes a mess. But when Jesus is the head and we allow him to be the head, we allow him to be the Lord of our lives, we have the certainty of the promises of his book. We have the certainty of the promise of Proverbs 3:5-6. Do you know that one, brother Josh? Trust in the... with all thine heart. And what? In all thy... and... he shall direct thy path.

¹ 1 Corinthians 11:3.

God says, "Listen. If you will put me first, if you will make me Lord, if you will let me direct you, if you will just trust in me, brother Orlando, I will guide you."

I was watching... talking about driving truck, brother Preston. I was watching. They have this show on I think it is Discovery or whatever. It is ice road truckers. Have you guys ever seen those? They... well, they normally drive a truck in Canada on these roads, basically they are packed snow and ice. Well, they had this special and they are driving these trucks in the Himalayas. I mean it is in the Himalayan Mountains. I mean and you are going... and these trucks are nothing like the trucks we have here. Basically it is a metal chassis and a little bit of metal framing, but all of it is wood. So you get in a wreck in one of these trucks it is bad news.

So here these folks are and they get in these trucks and they like men. They are going up these mountain highways and, I mean, you look down the side of it, right, Andrew? What do you see? Like 3000 to 4000 foot drops. Every trucker has a spotter, someone that guides them to show them the way. And that is a lot like life. I am reminded of that. Life is lot of times pretty precarious, isn't it? Make one wrong decision, ruined, destruction. But we have a spotter. We have one that leads the way and that is our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, if we will follow him. And then we have got to follow him if we are going to be the kind of leaders God wants us to be.

Let's go back to our text in Ephesians chapter five and I want to talk a little bit tonight about love and the common goal in marriage.

Andrew, naturally your natural desires is to care about others or is it concern about yourself? Concerned about yourself, right? Right? I mean, that is man's natural inclination. Man's fleshly inclination is not biblical love, but what? Fleshly love. Biblical love, brother Andy, do remember what biblical love is or charity? Do you remember a basic definition of it?

Basically, yeah. I mean, it is... exactly. It is... Love is seeking to meet the needs of others rather than my own needs, looking for the betterment of other people rather than myself. We find love defined and exemplified for us through Jesus Christ.

Did Jesus come seeking his own? No. The Bible says in Philippians two, the Bible says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."²

Who what?

"...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."³

² Philippians 2:5.

³ Philippians 2:7-8.

Why? Why did he die? Miss [?], why did he die?

Hey, to save us. He died, as it says in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”⁴

The example of love that we have is Jesus. He loved us so much that he gave himself for us and here in Ephesians chapter five we find that example used in the context of relationships, of the husband and wife relationship.

Now I want you to listen to me tonight. Whether you are married or not, whether you are a young person, maybe you are Andrew’s age, going to be nine years old, you say, “Pastor, daddy, marriage is a long way off.” Maybe you are brother Josh and you are not dating right now, but like to some day, like to get married some day or maybe you are Mrs. Lukens and your husband has gone on to glory, but you know what? You are here to be a blessing to others. There is something for all of us today. For all of us. And whether we are looking to be married, whether we are married, or whether we have been, there is something we can do. We can encourage one another to do what is right.

Listen. I will tell you. Our church will only be as strong as our families. If we do not have strong families within our church, we will not have a strong church. If there is a bunch of foolishness in our homes and unbiblical ideas in our homes, then our church will be full of foolishness and unbiblical ideas.

So here in Ephesians five I want to talk about love tonight. Now we are going to talk next week and we are going to deal more with the wives next week and their role in the home and we find that in verses 22 and 23 and 24. But in verse number 25 the command is given to husbands to do what?

Husbands, without question, without any qualifiers, we are to do what? Love your wife.

“Husbands, love your wives.”⁵

And then we are given the example. We are given the standard by which we are to love. He doesn’t say, “Husbands, love your wives as the apostle Peter loves his wife.” He doesn’t say, “Husbands, love your wives as the pastor loves his wife,” does he? He doesn’t say, “Husbands, love your wives,” and it is commonly thought that Paul was married, but his wife either passed away or something happened. “Husbands, love your wives, as I loved my wife.”

He says, no, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.”⁶

⁴ John 3:16.

⁵ Ephesians 5:25.

⁶ Ibid.

The example, the standard that we are given is the kind of love we are to try to meet and match and surpass if we can. And it is impossible. We can strive to. The love that Jesus has for his Church, the love that Jesus has for his saints.

And we find here it says this.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.”⁷

And the first point tonight is this. “And gave himself for it.”⁸

Listen to me now. Love within the marriage is sacrificial. It often requires a putting down of one’s self and what we want and a seeking after what is best for that other person.

Jesus Christ gave himself for his Church, for his bride. And we are to love our wives. We are to love our spouses as Christ loved his church. Love has to be sacrificial. Why?

We have lost the idea and the meaning of sacrifice today, haven’t we? What is a sacrifice? Let’s talk about that for a second. In the Old Testament what was a sacrifice?

Anybody? Brother Robert, do you remember?

Ok. Well, talking about blood that was shed. That little lamb, that was often—or the bull or whatever they used—was a sacrifice.

Brother Josh, would you want to be the little lamb? No. I wouldn’t. Why? Because that little lamb, that sacrifice was destined to what? To die. To give all.

I may not have this illustration entirely right, but they are... you know, they have the chicken and the pig and the chicken, you know, is complaining to the pig about how he had to lay eggs every day. And, boy, the pig just got tired of listening to the chicken complain.

“Oh, I got to lay eggs every day and then the farmer comes in and takes all my eggs and I have got to lay more.”

And the pig said to the chicken, he said, “At least all you have to do is lay eggs.”

Why? Because the pig, in order to give what he had, had to die.

Sacrifice. Sacrifice is not convenient, is it? It is never convenient. Sacrifice rarely fits in to your schedule. Sacrifice rarely fits in to your goals if they are not God’s goals.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Go to Romans, please, chapter 12. Keep your finger there in Ephesians chapter five. I want to sort of illustrate this idea of sacrifice a little more. In Romans chapter 12 the Bible says this, right? It says in verse number one, the Bible says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.”⁹

I think the best example that I can muster up is the idea of, if you remember Abraham and Isaac. God came to Abraham and said, “Abraham, I want you to take your son, your only son Isaac. I want you to take him to the top of the mountain and I want you to use him and sacrifice him to me.”

That required some humility. It required a willingness on Isaac’s part.

Isaac wasn’t a little boy. He was probably about a teenager. He gets to the top of the mountain. Daddy says, “All right, now. Isaac, lay down on the wood. I am going to tie you down, son.”

Now the Bible doesn’t... for what we know Isaac just willingly laid himself down. And, again, this is a picture of what Christ would do. You remember God said to Abraham. Abraham asked, “Lord, where is the lamb?”

And what did God say to Abraham?

“God will provide myself a lamb.”

But, again, the idea of sacrifice is a laying down of one’s life, a laying down of one’s goals and in the marriage context, that is how it has to be. And that is where the difficulty lies. Love is sacrificial. It can’t be all about you. It will never work. It has to be all about the Lord. It has to be all be all about others.

I like the little acronym, right? J O Y. Do you guys know that one? Do you know what Jesus stands for? Jesus. What does the O stand for? Others. What does the Y stand for? The only way to have joy is to put what? Jesus first, others second and yourself last. That is love.

We talked a couple of weeks ago of how our vertical relationship, our relationship to God must be right, but when it comes to how we are to treat our wives or our husbands, it is to be in a spirit of love.

What does the Bible say? Jesus was asked...

Brother Josh, what is the greatest commandment?

All thy what? Soul and strength, yeah. I mean, in different versions or different places in the Bible. And the second us like unto it. What? Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

⁹ Romans 12:1.

So, yes, we are to love God and that is first and foremost what we ought to concentrate on. What will happen as we love God like we should, we begin to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. We begin to put them first. We begin to sacrifice ourselves for them. We have to say, ok, you know what? You are more important than me. God is more important than me. Love is sacrificial.

Jesus Christ loved his Church and what did he do? How did he demonstrate that love, but he gave himself for it. Let me ask you, men. Let me ask you, brother Robert, being a married man here tonight, if you... And maybe you have. I am not saying you have or haven't. I am just going to ask you this question. If you gave yourself entirely to your wife and said, "I just want to be a blessing to you in any way I can. What I want is not important. What you want is important." How do you think your marriage would go?

Yeah, but how... yeah. But how would it end up? Would that please your wife? That would be a blessing to your wife? She would look at you and say... my wife would look at me and say, "Are you sick? Do you need help? Yeah.... there is a catch here."

But that is really how it ought to be every day. That is the attitude as it ought to be both on the side of the wife and the husband.

Wives say, "Well, you know, women are just naturally sacrificial and loving and nurturing," and that is true to a degree. I think more so than man. But do you know what? Often times it is for selfish reasons. The motivations truly aren't self sacrificial. Love is sacrificial.

What is the mutual goal within the marriage? Let's go back to our text in Ephesians chapter five. And listen. I am telling you. Whether you are married or not tonight this is important. Get a hold of this. In Ephesians chapter five this is what God will bless in your marriage.

And I am.... like I said this morning. I don't stand before you as a husband—my wife is here. She could testify to this—as a husband who has got all of this figured out. I mean, I have got it figured out. I just have a hard time sometimes doing it.

Don't laugh too hard over there. I don't know what to do with [?].

Anyway... yeah, just love her. Amen. Love her in spite of it all.

No. I don't stand before you as the perfect husband. I don't stand before you having it all figured out. I struggle a lot sometimes loving my wife as the Bible commands. But I am telling you. When I do, our marriage is blessed. This is the key.

So love... what is the goal of this? In sacrificing yourself for others, what is the end game? Well, let's read down. Look at verse 26.

So our example, Jesus Christ, he loved the Church. He gave himself for it and... that he might what? Sanctify and what?

“...cleansing it with the washing of water by the word.”¹⁰

Verse 27.

“That he might present it to himself...”¹¹

As a what kind of church?

“...a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”¹²

Verse 28 Paul takes it and turns it on a head and he says, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”¹³

You want to love yourself? You want to take care of yourself? Take care of your wife, because God will bless you. Your home will be blessed. You will have a happy marriage, a joyful marriage.

Verse 29.

“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.”¹⁴

What is the command? What is the goal as we self sacrifice and love, Andrew? The goal, if you are going to be a husband some day is to grow your wife and I don't mean physically, but to grow your...

You all didn't catch that or maybe you did and you just didn't think it was funny.

But to mature your wife, mature your marriage to where it could be presented to the Lord as a glorious marriage. It could be presented to the world, something that could be lifted up not for our glory, right? The Church, Jesus... what was his goal in saving the church and in washing it and cleansing it so that the Church might be proud and we could walk around and say, “Boy, aren't we something special?” No, so that it will honor God, so that in the world what would it be? What does Jesus say we ought to be? We ought to be salt and what? Light. So that we could be a shining light, a city on a hill. You can't hide it.

¹⁰ Ephesians 5:26.

¹¹ Ephesians 5:27.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ephesians 5:28.

¹⁴ Ephesians 5:29.

So when the world looks and says, “There is something different at Faith Baptist Church. They are a little weird, but there is something different there. They are a little different, but there is something different there.” And they begin to be curious and begin to understand that the difference is what Jesus has done for us, what Jesus is doing in our lives. And it is the same thing in our marriage, men and women.

The goal in this love and this self sacrificial idea is for mutual growth and holiness.

What have you done or what will you do to help your spouse grow spiritually, emotionally and then [?]?

That ought to be the goal. Say, “I just want to help you grow. I want to help you be more spiritual.”

That is a huge burden.

I ask myself and, you know, I am ashamed to say that many times I don’t do a whole lot to help my wife grow spiritually. I need to do more. I don’t... and we do. I mean there is things that we work on. There is things that we talk about. There is things that I have to speak to her about and she has to speak to me about and we grow together. That is what God wants, mutual growth and holiness.

Again, going to the end goal, being perfection in the church.

I think a lot of folks think marriages happen. Right, brother Orlando? You know, you go to the church and you do your... here comes the bride. You know, she comes down in all white and all beautiful and all, you know, right? And she comes up there and you go through your vows. You kiss. All right, we are done. That is all it takes. The rest of it is just cruise control, man.

What do you think, brother Josh? Is that how it works?

Hopefully. No, you are wrong. That is not how it works. Wrong answer.

What do you think, brother Robert, is that how it works? No. I am telling you as a married man that is now how it works. Ten years of marriage, that is not how it works. A lot of it, you know, what is sad is that it has taken me about 10 years to learn a little bit. I wish I had known more. I wish had learned well. I wish I had understood the importance of some of these things and I still am learning.

And that is why I am trying to teach you, both you, us that are married and you that are unmarried, whether it be Stormy who someday might get married, all right, if you can snag some guy. No, I am teasing. Brother Orlando, brother Josh, Andrew, William, Elizabeth, David, yeah. I know. I don’t know if David will ever get married as ornery as he is. No, I am teasing. [?] clean up his messes.

But my point is that we need to say, “Ok, you know what? That is the goal.”

My goal should be as a husband to say, “I want my wife to be more spiritual.”

A year from now this is what our goal ought to be, brother Robert, brother Preston, to say, “I want my wife to be more spiritual a year from now than she is today.”

The goal of a wife should be, Kristen, to say, “You know what? I want my husband to be more spiritual tomorrow than he is today and I want to be a part of that.”

And I am not saying you sit there and harp on your husband, right? Right, Stormy? You are not going to make your husband spiritual by nagging at him.

Why don't you do this and why don't you do that?

I know... why don't we sing a little song tonight. We used... we went to summer camp when I was in college. We went and sang in a summer camp and they had a little chorus and I liked it. It is biblical. It is actually based on a proverb. Are you ready, brother Orlando?

“A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.”¹⁵

So it goes like this. I goes:

“A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.”¹⁶

And then you clap.

“A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.”¹⁷

For one goes drip, drip, drip and the other goes yak, yak, yak. One goes drip, drip, drip and the other goes yak, yak...

Don't sing that to your wife. I did sing it to sister Kristy. She looked at me like... you know, I was teasing with her, but that is the truth. You are not going to change your husband by nagging him. It doesn't work that way.

Do you know how you can change your husband? Praying for him. Being a blessing to him.

Men, do you want to know how you are going to change your wife? It is not by brow beating her. I have tried that. It doesn't work. You know, getting after.

¹⁵ Proverbs 27:15.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Now there are times where I have to... and sister Kristy will tell you. There is times I have to get after her and say, "Now, hey, we need to do this differently," but it has to be done in what kind of spirit? The spirit of pride?

What do you think, brother Orlando, pride or meekness? What works better? You are almost ready to be married. You have got it figured out.

Meekness saying, "You know, hon, I love you. This is what I feel needs to be done. How can I help you?"

And I fail at that many times. But that is what... that is the kind of marriage we ought to desire to have.

Look at verse 29 again.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth... it."¹⁸

What is the idea of nourish? Anybody? Yeah, give it what it needs. Feed it. Nourisheth it.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but..."¹⁹

What does he do? He nourisheth it. He buys the [?] big axes. Yeah, the white castles. He does that, because that is what he does. And, you know, the Bible says that is what we ought to do to our marriage. We ought to feed it, nourish it, make it fat. Again, not physically, but in the spiritual sense.

Look at the second thing.

"but nourisheth it and cherisheth it."²⁰

Have you got anything that your cherish? What does it mean to cherish, anybody? To care for. What were you saying? To love, ok. To put value upon, right?

Brother Josh, is there anything you cherish? His phone. He likes his phone. Cherishes it, values it.

Brother Orlando, is there anything you cherish? [?] all right. Thank you, brother Robert. Oh, what do you do, man? You take care of it. You clean it. You oil it. Right, brother Orlando, you look at it.

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:29.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

You know, you may [?] right? You cherish it. You value it and that is the kind of thing that God wants for our marriage. We value it. We cherish it. Man, we look it over. We treat it as something of great value, not something we can just throw away.

That is why 60 percent of marriages end in divorce, because no one cherishes their marriage. No one nourishes their marriages. They just think, man, it just happens. It doesn't just happen. It is hard work.

What is the old saying? Anything worth having is worth what? Yeah. Anything worth doing is worth doing right. I think that is really the thing.

There is another one, too, but I think I was crossing them together. If it is worth having a great marriage, it is worth doing it right.

Men and women, love is self sacrificial, beholding our example, Jesus Christ. We nourish, we feed, we cherish our marriages. The end goal is perfection and maturity in our marriage so that we might be... our marriages might honor God.

Brother Orlando, you ought to say, "You know what? When I do get married, I want my marriage to honor the Lord. I don't... it doesn't matter to me what my in laws think. It doesn't matter to me what my parents think. It doesn't matter to me what the world thinks about my marriage. It matters to me what God thinks about my marriage and I want to honor him."

Because some of the decisions you are going to make as a husband, guess what? Your in laws aren't going to agree with you. [?]

The world might say, "You are crazy."

But do you know what? I want my marriage to honor God. I want to glorify God. I want it to be a biblical marriage. I want it to look like Jesus loving his Church. That is me loving my wife.