

Husbands Love Your Wives
Ephesians 5:25-33
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INTRODUCTION

1. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn to Ephesians chapter 5.
2. We are looking at the second relationship that is found in verses 25-33—husbands.
3. We looked last time at verses 22-24 where we learned that the first example of submission Paul gives is that of wives to their own husbands.
4. Now we're considering the second example of submission and it begins in verse 25.
5. Read Ephesians 5:25-33.
6. We are currently looking at the subject of submission as it is seen in the various relationships found in Ephesians 5:22-6:4.
7. Submission is a direct consequence to being filled with the Spirit.
8. When you're walking by the Spirit, not only will you not carry out the lusts of the flesh as Galatians 5:16 says, but you will also sing, give thanks, and submit to one another in the fear of Christ.
9. Wives will submit to their own husbands, husbands will submit by loving their wives. Children will submit to their

parents and parents will submit to their children. Slaves will submit to their masters, and masters will submit to their slaves.

10. When you're Spirit-filled, you will submit in every relationship.
11. So what Paul is communicating then is submission in our functional roles.
12. He is not saying that to submit means you are inferior.
13. A wife is not inferior to her husband, as Genesis 1:28 indicates she was created to co-rule the earth with Adam but in terms of her role, she is the weaker vessel.
14. Adam, as well as all men, was created to be the head of Eve and given the role of loving his wife by providing and caring for his wife.
15. "Man is constituted in such a way to be the stronger partner. Someone has to be the protector—the one who provides, preserves, and cares—and God designed that it be the man from the very beginning" (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family. Study Guide.* 15).
16. As we look at this second example of submission, we will see two truths: *The duty of love* and *the display of love*.
17. Notice first *the duty of love* in verse 25.

I. The Duty of Love (v.25)

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

“The duty of the husband is not to enforce his wife's submission. His duty, repeated three times (vv. 25, 28, 33) is to love her” (Kenneth L. Boles, Galatians & Ephesians, The College Press NIV commentary. Eph 5:25).

A. It is Commanded

The word Paul uses for love is in the imperative mood. Paul is not requesting husbands love their wives, he is commanding it.

Craig Keener says, “Although it was assumed that husbands should love their wives, ancient household codes never list love as a husband's duty; such codes told husbands only to make their wives submit. Although Paul upholds the ancient ideal of wifely submission for his culture, he qualifies it by placing it in the context of mutual submission: husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, by willingly laying down their lives for them” (The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament. Eph 5:25).

This is the husbands supreme responsibility toward his wife. He is to love his wife with the “same unreserved, selfless, and sacrificial love that Christ has for His church” (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible: Ephesians 5:25).

B. It is Continual

Love, as it is used here, is also in the present tense which

indicates that a husband is to love his wife at all times. “The present imperative calls for a continual habitual action” (Fritz Rienecker, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek NT*, 538).

“The husband who thinks God ordered the family so that his wife would be at his beck and call has it backwards. He is to love and serve her. The father who thinks of his wife and children as personal possessions to be under his command has a skewed concept of the responsibility that is his as head of the family. His headship means first of all that he is to serve them, protect them, and provide for their needs” (John MacArthur, *What the Bible Says About Parenting*, 164).

In all three verses places in this chapter where Paul calls for the husband to love his wife, it is used in the present tense. In Colossians 3:19 the same word is used and occurs in the same tense, voice, and mood. In other words, it’s the same as Ephesians 5:25.

Paul commands husbands to continually, habitually, love their wives.

II. The Display of Love (vv.26-33)

The word that Paul uses for “love” is an action word, as all verbs are. It is a “deep-seated, thorough-going, intelligent and purposeful. [It is] a love in which the entire personality - not only the emotions but also the mind and the will - expresses itself” (William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary. 250).

A. It is Sacrificial

Agapao refers to self-sacrifice which is the highest expression of love.

A.T. Robertson calls it “the high-water mark of love” (Robertson’s Word Pictures).

This is a word that means “to demonstrate or show one’s love” (Louw-Nida).

1. 1 John 3:18 uses it in this way: “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”
2. John 15:13 defines it as “lay down his life for his friends.”
3. Romans 5:6, 8 takes it further to describe those “friends” as those who are “ungodly” and “sinners.”

God sent Christ to die on the behalf of those who were “ungodly” and “sinners.”

John MacArthur, says, “That sort of self-less, undeserved love is completely beyond human comprehension. Yet that is the love that the just and infinitely holy God had toward us even while we were yet sinners. The God who hates every sinful thought and every sinful deed nevertheless loves the sinners who think and do those things, even while they are still hopelessly enmeshed in their sin. Even when men openly hate God and do not have the least desire to give up their sin, they are still the objects of God’s redeeming love as long as they live. Only at death does an unbeliever cease to be loved by God. After that, he is eternally beyond the pale of God’s love and is destined irrevocably for His wrath” (The

MacArthur NT Commentary, Romans).

This is the highest expression of love and this is how husbands are to love their wives—“just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.”

John Calvin said, “If they are honored to bear his image, and to be, in some measure, his representatives, they ought to resemble him also in the discharge of duty” (Calvin’s Commentaries: Ephesians).

“Sacrificial love is undeserved, yet it goes to the furthest extremity, as exemplified in Christ. It says, ‘You don’t deserve anything, but I’ll give you everything. You don’t deserve anything, but I’ll die for you. You don’t deserve even My best, but I’ll give you My life. And Paul is saying that we are to say to our wives, ‘You may not deserve all those things, you may be a sinner, and you may not be all that you could be, but that is never the issue. I love you and commit myself to you, even if you are the least deserving. And I will give you everything I have—even to the point of dying for you’” (Taken from John MacArthur’s sermon, “The Duty of the Husband” Series: The Fulfilled Family).

“Husbands are not told to keep their wives in subjection; they are told to love their wives as Christ so loved the church” (William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians 5:25).

Many men are constantly quoting Ephesians 5:22, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord” but how many men are willing to fulfill all that is demanded of *them* in verses 25-33?

4. The key to this entire chapter is *submission*
 - a) Verse 21 says that when believers are “filled with the Spirit,” they will “be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”
 - b) Not only are wives to “submit” according to verse 22, but husbands are also called to submit by *how* they love their wives.

B. It is Purifying (vv.26-27)

“That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”

1. Christ’s love for the church included purification

The greatest and highest kind of love is that which seeks to purify and not defile the one loved.

When you love someone, his purity is your goal. No one loves something and then want to defile it. Christ loved His church, so He wanted to purify His people.

2. Christ purifies His church

a) He does that *initially* at salvation

The very moment a person believes he is “sanctified” and “cleansed” from his sin.

“Sanctify” Gr.hagiazo, means, to “set-apart, ” “to make holy, consecrate” (GING)

“Cleanse” Gr.katharizo, means to “make clean, cleanse, purify” (GING)

At salvation, Christ makes you holy and clean from your sin.

The Bible says:

- (1) Christ has “forgiven you all trespasses” (Col.2:13).
- (2) Christ has cleansed you so that “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool” (Isa.1:18).
- (3) Psalm 103:12 says that He has removed your sin “as far as the east is from the west.”
- (4) Micah 7:9 says that He then cast them “into the depths of the sea.”

Sanctification and purification occur *initially* at salvation but it also occurs daily in the believer’s life.

b) He does that daily

In John 13:10 Jesus says to Peter, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet.”

“In the Orient, a man would get up in the morning and bathe himself. Then, as he went through the day and his feet got dirty, he would wash them as they needed it” (MacArthur).

When you were saved you were totally cleansed positionally before God. But everyday that you walk through the world you need your feet washed. 1 John 1:9 teaches that Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

In other words, you were bathed once, and you're continuously kept pure.

3. The husband is to purify his wife

That means that he wants only the best for his wife. He cannot bear for her to be corrupted or misled by anything evil or harmful.

As her husband, he seeks to love her, lift her up, draw her to God, pour virtue into her life, and make her, in every possible way, like Christ.

He will never put her in a compromising situation or do anything to defile her. His love will always seek to purify her.

As Colossians 3:19 says he loves his wife and is “not...embittered against them.”

Husbands “have the responsibility in [their] home to apply to [their] wife every purifying influence that will make her holy. Everything [they] do as husbands is to seek to purify [their] wife” (John MacArthur, The Fulfilled Family. Study Guide. 62).

Paul says that he does this by “the washing of water with the word.”

In simple terms this means that the lives of believers

are cleansed as they hear the words of Christ and obey them” (William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians 5:26).

Husbands, you must be engaging your wife in the Word, whether it’s through you reading it to her or with her, listening to sermons, reading books—whatever the mode, you must lead her with God’s Word. And the best kind of leading is example.

You must make sure you are being “diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15).

You have to start with you before you can lead her. If you want her to be in the Word, then you set the example and lead her by that example.

C. It is Caring (vv.28-30)

“So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. ”

1. Husbands are to love their wives in the same way they love themselves

With the same care you show your own body you are to show toward your wife. When you wife has a need you are to meet it just as you would for yourself.

2. Verse 29 points out a basic truth: “no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it.”

“Nourishes” Gr.ektrepho, means, “to nourish” or “feed.” It was primarily used in reference to nurturing or raising children. It simply means ‘to mature.’

Men were called to nurture their wives, to bring them to maturity, and to provide for their needs. The word ektrepho also literally means “to feed.” This means that the husband is to be the provider. This is never said of the wife. She is not the provider. She is the one who is provided for.

In the Mishna (This was the codification of Jewish law which gave the standards of Jewish behavior, and reveals the attitudes the Jewish people had at the time of Christ), we learn what the duties were for married women:

“She was to grind flour, bake, launder, cook, nurse her children, make the beds, spin wool, prepare the children for school, and take the children to school to ensure their safe arrival.

From the Mishna, we know that some women did work together with their husbands in the fields picking fruit—but it was always alongside of and in support of their husbands.

According to the Mishna, there were some women who worked apart from their husbands in the marketplace, and were considered to be a disgrace to society.

A wife could work at crafts or horticulture in the home, and even sell the fruits of her labor. That was sometimes done to supplement the husband’s income or to be used as pocket money for personal use.

Although a housewife was kept very busy with her work in the house, she was still expected to adorn herself properly. That point was stressed in many traditions.

Apart from strictly household work, the wife was also responsible for hospitality and the care of guests. Wives were also active in charitable work, giving alms to the poor people who came to their houses participating in charitable projects outside the home..

The point is this: The Jewish laws were very clear. The woman's priority was in the home. She was to take care of all the needs of her home, her children, her husband, strangers, the poor and needy, and any guests who would come along. Then, she could even work alongside her husband to assist him in his work. And if she had any time left over, she could be just as enterprising as she wanted" (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family. Study Guide*, 30-31).

This is what the older women were to teach the younger women in Titus 2:4-5 "to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored."

The word "cherishes" (thalpo), literally means, "to soften or warm with body heat." It is used to describe a bird sitting on her nest (cf. Deut.22:6).

Husbands are to literally provide a secure, warm, soft place as a provision for their wives. Husbands are to provide security. This is relinquished in the case of the working mother. She should not be the one who

nourishes and feeds; she should receive that provision.

This is the kind of care that Christ has for His church. He feeds and provides for her.

D. It is Unbreakable (vv.31-33)

“FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.”

1. This is a direct quote from Genesis 2:24
2. It emphasizes the permanent union that Christ has with His church and the husband to his wife
 - a) The Greek word *leipo* means, “to leave” but the word here is used here is in an intensified form, *kataleipo*, and means, “to abandon completely.”

Married couples run into a big problem if they don't leave their mothers and fathers and completely when they step into the marriage relationship. This doesn't mean that you stop talking to them but it does mean that you don't run to them anymore for everything. Your dependence has now shifted from your parents to your partner.

- b) The word “joined” is *proskollao*, which is an

intensified form of the word kallao which means “to connect up.” Proskollao means “to glue together.”

“The idea is that you are to leave, and then you are to glue the new relationship together. It is a new relationship, absolutely unbreakable. Two become one” (MacArthur).

3. Paul describes this “great mystery” as the church and charges the husband to “love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (vv.32-33).

CONCLUSION

1. As we close this morning, let me ask you a few questions:
2. Are you loving your wife in this way?
3. Are you sacrificing your life by putting your own likes, desires, opinions, preferences, and welfare aside in order to please your wife and meet her needs?
4. Are you seeking to love her, lift her up, draw her to God, pour virtue into her life, and make her, in every possible way, like Christ?
5. Are you seeking to provide a secure, warm, soft place as a provision for their wives?
6. You are to “love” your wife in this manner.
7. Let’s pray.