

Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Ephesians 5:22-33

Ephesians 5:22–33 (NKJV) (Part 2—On Men and Husbands)

“22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

On Men and Husbands

In the last study we left off with Paul’s instruction to wives. We noted that Paul speaks directly to the husbands and wives in this text—not to one about the other. He did not suggest that a man should say to his wife that she is to be submissive any more than to suggest that a woman criticize the leadership of her husband. We are all called to be patient with one another, love one another, and serve one another for the glory of God.

This is especially true of men who wish to belittle their wives. As we will see, men are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. This places the greatest level of responsibility for the marriage on the man.

We learned that wives are called to be helpers to their husbands. Therefore, a woman may share with her husband and help him in decision making. Many women are gifted with insights that differ from those of men and can benefit them if and when they are willing to listen. Those men who genuinely love and respect their wives can benefit from the help they provide. Men are benefited when they care about those things that matter to their wives. A Godly man will seek for and allow his wife to weigh in on decision making, leadership, and management.

We also noted that as we study these principles we become keenly aware of our humanness and shortcomings. Teachings like this may be difficult to process and may inspire unbiblical self-condemnation which can lead to discouragement or depression. May we all be aware of this fact! God has not called us to a standard that He is unwilling or incapable of accomplishing in us. It is His work in us, not our work in Him. God is patient with our humanity and understands that we are frail. May we as husbands and wives be patient and caring for each other! May we learn from one another and grow in the grace of God. We are called to patiently care for one another, not criticize or act in impatience. As we self examine, we all see our own weaknesses. May this fact lead us to greater dependence upon the Lord—not to criticism of ourselves or our spouses.

That He Might Present Her to Himself

A man who does not love his wife will be a miserable man. The Scriptures plainly tell us that the woman was taken from man, for man. *“For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.”* 1 Corinthians 11:8–9 (NKJV) Therefore, if a man loves himself he will love his wife and do all he can to provide her with the best he has to offer.

Paul articulated this when he said, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.”* (vss. 25-29)

Paul uses the example of Christ to show a man how to love his wife. He breaks down several attributes that serve as examples of genuine love and care.

Love

First of all we recognize that Paul said, *“love”* your wife. *“Love”* is translated from the Greek word *“Agapao.”* This is a verb describing a self-sacrificial love that seeks the best for its object. Therefore, Paul is instructing husbands to love their wives with self-sacrificial love.

Self-sacrificial love will embrace a meaning we must develop. Therefore, we will examine the ways in which Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her.

Initiation and Provision

First of all we should mention the fact that Christ initiated a relationship with us by first making the relationship possible. Jesus willingly laid down His life for us so that we could have a relationship with Him. Therefore, husbands should learn that the first attribute required in genuine love for one’s wife is provision and service. When a man desires to take to himself a wife, he must be willing to initiate a relationship that will cost him. He must not look at marriage as something he will gain but as something he will sacrifice for in order to gain. The Book of Proverbs tells us that *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.”* Proverbs 18:22 (NKJV) However, we also know that Paul said, *“...if you do marry... such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.”* 1 Corinthians 7:28 (NKJV) Therefore we know that taking a wife is wonderful and beneficial to man. (*“It is not good for man to be alone.”* Genesis 2:18) However, the responsibilities and duties of being a husband are costly. They are first and foremost self-sacrificing.

Love vs. Lust

One of the greatest problems we discover in struggling marriages is a lack of understanding about the true meaning of love. Most people who marry today have not been given good teaching on the difference between love and lust. Lust is self-serving. Love is self-sacrificial. Lust seeks for what it can gain. Love seeks for how it can give. When a husband sees his wife as someone who is there to serve him and make him happy, he will end up a disappointed man. This is true for women as well. A woman who is looking to her husband for fulfillment and meaning in life will be sadly disappointed. Her role as a wife is first and foremost to be a servant to Christ—then to her husband. If she has children,

the same rule applies: Jesus, her husband, and then her children! A woman's fulfillment will come as she walks in step with her purpose in the Lord. A husband who is seeking fulfillment, contentment, and service in a wife will be no more benefited than the Lord is by His Church. Jesus did not seek us out because He was in need. He sought us out because we were! When a man takes a wife so that he can serve her, as Christ does the Church, that woman will have no issues with submission. A husband who lives like and acts like Christ toward his wife will end up a happy man.

Sanctified – Set Apart

In verses 26 Paul said that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the Church, giving himself for her, *“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...”* “Sanctify” means to set apart. To “cleanse” is to make clean or rid of evil. Therefore, the husband who desires a bride *“without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,”* (vs. 27) can only aid her in becoming such through the word. A man who will be a great husband is a man of the word—a man who knows the word—a man who teaches and guides his wife in the word. As a bride grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, she is transformed day by day, more and more, into the image God created her to be. A man who invests himself (and the word) into his wife will have a wife that is far more likely to be *“glorious”* (vs. 27). This fact follows the rule which clearly shows that a man will receive from his bride as he invests in his bride, *“that He might present her to Himself a glorious [bride], not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”* (vs. 27) If a man neglects to lead and teach his wife—as Christ leads and teaches His Church—he is failing to fulfill his God-given place of leadership. This is the cause of many frustrations. Far too often a wife will be tempted to “take the lead” spiritually over the home because the husband is not doing so. The man must rise up and fulfill his God given role. He must be an example in the word, in conduct, and in love.

A Double Blessing

Paul said that *“husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies...”* (vs. 28). This simple statement declares the propensity of every man and woman to care for self first. We tend to think first of our own interests—and our own desires. Paul makes clear that *“...he who loves his wife loves himself”* (vs. 28). He said, *“...no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church”* (vs. 29). Therefore, if a man would truly *“love life and see good days,”* he will invest himself in his bride. The Lord created and nourishes the Church first and foremost for his own interests. (See Ephesians 1:5, 9 and Philippians 2:13) It is certain that we as the bride of Christ benefit from His work, but the primary purpose of Christ for His Church is that we give Him glory. It is a double blessing! Christ is glorified and we are blessed beyond measure. The husband (Christ) and the wife (the Church) both share in the glorious design predetermined from the foundations of the world. In the same way, a man who takes a wife must serve her in order to make for himself a bride who brings blessing and honor to him. It is a double blessing for husband and wife! The man is blessed and his wife is too! Far too often a man will blame his wife for her shortfalls rather than first examining himself and his investments in her. For this reason I repeat, *“A man who does not love his wife will be a miserable man.”*

One might illustrate using the medium of finances. If a man makes a living and spends all he has on himself without saving and investing, he may later find himself in future trouble. In the same way, if a man does not set aside time, resources, and energy for investment in his wife, he may suffer a miserable future.

Leaving Father and Mother

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (vs. 31) A man who is ready to marry will shift his allegiance from parent to bride. This does not suggest any disrespect or dishonor—but to the contrary. Parents are called to lead their children into adulthood so that they might leave home and be united in matrimony to their spouse, in the Lord.

It is obvious that Paul is utilizing the parallels of husband and wife to illustrate the relationship Christ has with His Church, *“for we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* (vs. 30-32) In the same way, Paul is utilizing the parallels between Christ and His Church to illustrate the relationship God designed for husband and wife. The entirety of Scripture declares the nature of God’s dealings with his own. Therefore, no more need be said related to Christ and the Church. Paul is focused on husbands, wives, and, as we will see, children and servants. His mission herein is the home! Therefore, he concludes with the injunction, *“let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”* (vs. 33) Remember men, respect begets respect. Women, remember the same. As we honor and obey the Lord, we sew into the life of blessing!

Readings: Ephesians 5:22-33 (Above)

Colossians 3:19 (NKJV) “Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

1 Peter 3:7 (NKJV) “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them [your wife] with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Biblical Fundamental Role of a Man: Leader

- 1) Love: Faithfulness, Understanding/Patience.
- 2) Love: Provision – Teaching and Counsel, Leadership and Example, Income, Affection.
- 3) Love: Protection – Doctrinal Error, Financial Error, Home Security, Unnecessary Pressure or Criticism.
- 4) Love: Procreation

Notes:

Questions

- 1) True or False: God does not care about how a man treats his wife.
- 2) True or False: A man who does not love his wife will be a miserable man.
- 3) True or False: It is not good for man to be alone.
- 4) True or False: The responsibilities and duties of being a husband are costly. They are first and foremost self-sacrificing.
- 5) True or False: Lust is self-serving. Love is self-sacrificial.
- 6) True or False: A wife may be tempted to “take the lead” over the home if the husband is not doing so.
- 7) True or False: It is the responsibility of the husband to provide for his wife and family.
- 8) True or False: A man can divorce his wife if she is insubmissive.
- 9) True or False: Men are accountable to God for their leadership in the home.
- 10) True or False: When husbands and wives both serve the Lord as they should, it is a double blessing!
- 11) True or False: God’s ways are the best ways, but the times have changed and people need to grow with the times.