

God-Ordained Husbands

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...”
Ephesians 5:25 NAS

In our last newsletter, (July of last year, remember?!) we began the discussion of God-ordained relationships. My premise in last year's newsletters was two-fold: The Church is not who God intends her to be because there is active rebellion within The Body; and that rebellion exists primarily because we are violating the authority structures God has ordained. Every problem which exists in the Body of Christ is a direct result of a violation of relationship on the part of one person or another. Last July we looked at our responsibility to God as our Father and the relationship each of us has to our parents and, to a limited extent, the relationship our children are to have toward us (more on that later, much later.)

I believe the next relationship which needs our consideration is that of husband. Fulfilling the God-ordained role of husband establishes the spiritual basis for all other relationships in the home, congregation and community. I believe **Ephesians 5:25** is the foundational scripture for this important relationship.

Love Your Wife

Perhaps the first thing to identify here is that the relationship of husband to wife is a command. God does not say here, “Husbands try to love your wife.” He does not say, “I would prefer it if you love your wife.” Nor did He say, “It will go best for you if you love your wife.” God commands that we love our wife. Therefore, if you do not love your wife, for any reason, you are immediately in conflict with God.

The second thing to identify is that God does not mention any pre-conditions to loving your wife. God does not command us to love our wife if she is beautiful, if she loves us back, if she is a good cook, if she has a pleasant disposition, if she satisfies our physical desires or even if she respects us. He says, “love you wife.” Period. End of sentence. No pre-conditions. Therefore, even if you love your wife but that love is predicated on something she is or something she does, you are in conflict with God.

The last thing to identify regarding this command is that this it comes from God. As such, violation of the command is rebellion against Him and carries with it very serious consequences. The breakdown of the family is a direct consequence of husbands not loving their wives. For far too long husbands have neglected their wives and given their love to others. In many cases their love has been for work or hobby rather than another woman, but the consequences are the same. Not loving your wife conflicts with God's purpose and commands and cannot achieve His will for your life or The Body of Christ!

God does not leave us merely with a command. He immediately gives us an example to follow, the perfect example. “Just (inasmuch) as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her.” Based on this, what does loving one's wife look like?

Unselfish

Christ's love for the Church is first and foremost, unselfish. **“... although He existed in the form of God, (He) did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”** **Philippians 2:6-7** NAS Jesus' love for The Church was so great that equality with God, GOD!, was insufficient to keep Him from becoming a man. His love for The Church was so great that He emptied Himself. He left behind His throne with God, His omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience to become a man. Ultimately, however, the greatest display of unselfishness of mankind was not in His coming to earth, but in the cross. It was there that **“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”** **2 Corinthians 5:21** NAS Can greater love be known or exhibited?! No.

This unselfishness is descriptive of how a husband is to love his wife. I can only speak for myself in saying I have found that to be a daunting example to follow. Before God tacked this Scripture on my heart I thought I loved Linda. However, as I looked at the example given by God which is to be reflective of my love for her I saw instead a selfish, self-centered, condition-requiring relationship a long ways from being like that of Christ for His Church. He repeatedly challenges me to be selfless. I am continually convicted by His example. Husbands, how do you measure up?

As convicting as is the selflessness of Christ, there remain two other attributes of Christ's love which require our consideration as we contemplate His example to love our wife.

Uncompromising

Scripture makes it clear that Jesus was tempted as we are (Hebrews 4:15). A difference between Him and us is that He was without sin. He was rejected by the very people He came to save. He did not compromise His goal. His goal brought Him into direct confrontation with the “spiritual leaders” of the day. He did not compromise His goal. His own family didn’t believe in Him (John 7:5). He did not compromise His goal. At the very moment of His greatest need those into whom He poured His life for three years abandoned Him to suffer unrivaled ridicule and die a cruel death. He did not compromise His goal. There was no temptation worth compromising the goal He had of redeeming The Church. He was without sin or stain.

Husbands, how do you compare to the example set before us? What is it which distracts you from being the Godly example of love to your wife? What or whom do you place ahead of your wife in terms of affection? What compromises do you make in thought, attitude or action which diminishes your love for her. The example of Christ establishes that we are to love her without compromise.

Spiritual

Christ’s love was spiritual, not temporal. Let us consider the context in which verse 25 comes: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 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.” Ephesians 5:25-27 NAS Christ’s love was not temporal, it was spiritual. Christ did not love The Church and die for Her to present Her with physical riches and temporal happiness. He sacrificed Himself that She may be sanctified, that She may be seen in all Her glory and be presented holy and blameless before Him.

This too is a part of His love, and as such a part of our example in loving our wife. We are not to love our wife to make her “happy”, to keep harmony in the home or to be an example to others. Our love must be spiritually focused. All of our love must be focused on her spiritual needs, on presenting her before God sanctified, in all her glory, holy and blameless. You see, a wife can know the fullness of God only as God is allowed to mold the husband into the instrument he needs to be. A wife unequally yoked does not know the fullness of God. Nor does a wife whose husband “loves” her with a love other than that of Christ.

Imagine!

Imagine for a moment, if you will, the impact Christian husbands loving their wives in this manner would have on the world around us! Divorce among Christians would be virtually non-existent. There would be no more unfaithfulness to another woman, to a job or the church. Because the Love of Christ is reflected in their husband, wives would find it incredibly easy to fulfill their God-ordained role as a wife. Children would learn to love by following the model of their father, establishing fertile ground for solid marriages in the future. Issues of conflict would be resolved based on the truth of who God is. Just imagine!

Justice

There are dozens of excuses why men have not loved their wives in this manner for generations. However, the excuses do not change the command from God Almighty! “Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church....”

Are you concerned about the consequences? Don’t be. Are you fearful of being abused by your wife? Don’t be. If you are to be fearful, fear rebelling against the Holy God of the universe. The truth of the matter is, when you are in proper relationship with the Father and proper relationship with your wife you will know the joy of Christ as described in Hebrews, “... who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2 NAS

LOVE

As you can see, we are not talking here of love as does the world. In fact, it is completely opposite. This love is not based on lust, beauty, selfishness, pride or some temporal concept of marital bliss. The love of a husband is to be unselfish, uncompromising and spiritually focused.

Here is a point to ponder: The Greek word for love in Ephesians 5:25 is no different than the word “love” in 1 John where we are commanded to love one another (1John 3:11, 23; 2John 5). The love which a husband has for a wife is not unique. It is the role the husband has toward his wife which is distinctive, not his love.

Get Real!

As a child of God there is no option to loving your wife. However, fear not! Being the husband God has ordained is a process, not an event which takes place upon the repeating of vows. You cannot love your wife in this manner without allowing Christ to live in you (Galatians 2:20). As God transforms you into the likeness of His Son it will be reflected in the way you love your wife.

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