

Marriage, God's Way (Part 2) – Eph 5:22-33

Eph 5:22-33 – in the middle of our **Happy To Be Stuck With You** series on marriage

If you recall, 3 weeks ago we talked about doing marriage God's way, from the wife's perspective

Finding that despite the interpretive gymnastics to which some people resort . . .

God calls wives to submit to their husbands, and to do so . . .

In everything; As their leader; As to Christ; With respect

That was Part 1 of Marriage, God's Way

This morning it's part 2 (**Marriage, God's Way**) and God's role for husbands

The core of which is, directly from v25 – *Husbands, love your wives*

Wives, submit to your husband; And . . .

Husbands – love your wife (v25a)

If you're going to have a God-honoring marriage . . .

If you're going to do marriage God's way – this is where it's at

It's summed up in these two roles, which Paul lays out right here in Eph 5

So follow along with me as I re-read it and refresh our memories (Eph 5:22-33)

➤ Paul spends 3 verses on the wife's role in marriage, and 8 ½ verses on the husbands
Why do you think that is?

It could be that we're a bit *thick-headed* as men

And fail to grasp the importance of this, or the implications if we fail to do it

Or, it could be that we're *bull-headed*

You know, full of pride & dead set on doing marriage our way

“My Daddy treated my momma this way, and my Grand-daddy before him – darned if

I'm going to change now”

“Don't tell me how to live my life or love my wife”

“It's my life and my wife – I'll do whatever I want thank you very much”

Ya; Until God drops a boulder on your head to wake you up and clue you in

And he will; B/c you don't do marriage your way and get away with it for very long

Maybe we're thick-headed or even bull-headed

But I think the main reason God spends so much time on the husband's role as opposed to the wife's, is that . . .

A marriage usually turns or burns on the husband's attitude and behavior

It usually succeeds or fails, flourishes or flounders, based on the husband

Not all the time, but most

Even when a wife goes off the deep end, it often starts w/ the husband's lack of love

That in no way excuses her sin – hear me on that . . .

A husband's failure to fulfill his role, in no way excuses a wife's failure to fulfill hers . . .

But it certainly goes a long way toward contributing to it

That's why I think Paul spends so much time here on the husband's role as opposed to the wife's

➤ So husbands, if you get one thing right in your marriage – love your wife

As in care for her, and care about her

Even if she doesn't submit, or submit very well

Even if he she doesn't respect you or respect you very much

Even if she doesn't love you, or love you like she should

If she's your wife – love her; period; no caveats

And notice it doesn't say – Husbands, *rule* over your wife

Or wield that authority you've been given; Use your power and position

You might expect that b/c v23 says that the husband is the head of the wife, her authority

But it doesn't

In fact, it says quite the opposite

We're told 3x in 8 verses to *love* our wives (v25, 28, 33)

To extend and express unwavering devotion and affection toward her

That's what the word for love in this passage means – it's *agapao* in Gr

It's an unconditional love, independent of her performance

So v25 would read – Husbands, show unwavering, unconditional devotion and affection to your wife . . .

Just like *Christ loved the church* (25a-b)

➤ Wives – you have to know that any husband who takes this seriously is overwhelmed by that statement

At least your standard, your end of the analogy is the church – a well intentioned, but still very *fallible* group of people

Our end of the analogy is Jesus himself – infallible and God in the flesh

And we're called to love like he loves; Hello

If it weren't for the strength that God provides as we walk with him each day, we'd be sunk

It's a high, high standard, especially when you consider that it means loving your wife . . .

• **As a servant-leader (v25b)**

That's the example of Jesus; That's how he loved us, the church

He was a leader who *served* those who followed him

He was explicit about it in **Luke 22:27** – *I am among you as the one who serves.*

And just before that he said let *the leader among you become as one who serves* (26)

If you're going to love as Christ loved, you have to lead as he led – and he led by serving
By putting our needs ahead of his own

By showing gentleness; By extending mercy

By doing whatever was needed, including washing feet

➤ You say, “Oh, I can't do that – my wife will take advantage of me”

I doubt it; But even if she does, so what

So what that your grace is abused, extend it anyway – God does

“You don't understand”

‘With everything on my plate, I don’t have the energy to serve her; to help her’
“It’s all I can do to get my shoes off and hit the couch when I get home”

No, I do understand

I understand that you either need to suck it up and draw on the strength that God provides . . . Or get a different job
Seriously, stop putting your job first and start putting your wife first

I mean, if wives played the “too-tired” card as much as their husbands, *nothing* would get done around the typical household

I found this **cartoon** from *The Pajama Diaries* (~1/09) that illustrates it perfectly
It describes the bedtime routine of a man (explain) . . .

And then the bedtime routine of a woman (explain; reverse years of aging in one night)
Definitely not a picture of servant-leadership

➤ And you realize don’t you, that this totally flies in the face of the standard marital thinking these days, right?
Especially the 50-50 approach to marriage – ever heard that?
“I’ll do my part if she does hers, and we’ll live happily ever after”

There’s only 2 problems with that – (1) It’s naïve; and (2) It’s *un*-biblical
It’s naïve b/c you don’t have to be married very long, or think about it very much, to realize it doesn’t work; it’s destined to fail
B/c her halfway is rarely your halfway, and u both end up on the short end of the stick

More importantly, it’s unbiblical b/c it’s *conditional*
The exact opposite of the *un*-conditional, all-out, agapao, servant-leader love to which we’re called here as husbands . . .
There’s nothing 50-50 about what Jesus did for us . . .
And there shouldn’t be anything 50-50 about your role in marriage

Marriage God’s way is all or nothing

You should be on the 100-0 plan – both of you; but especially husbands
Your mindset s/b – “I’ll do everything, whether or not she does anything” . . .
“B/c that’s what God calls me to; And that’s what he did for me” . . .
“And that’s what my marriage is supposed to show” (v32)

Husbands, love your wives, unconditionally, as a servant-leader
That’s the first part of loving her as Christ loved the church

The second part is loving her . . .

• **Sacrificially (v25c-27)**

Husbands, love your wife *sacrificially*

That comes from this phrase – *and gave himself up for her*
Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Meaning, he sacrificed *his* life for *our* life – the church, his bride

And he calls us as husbands, to do the same for *our* brides

To give up our dreams, hopes, desires, wants, wishes, interests, hobbies . . .
Our business aspirations, financial goals . . .

Whatever it takes – God calls you as a husband to give, and give *up, all*, for the sake of your wife and marriage

Is that not what Jesus did?

In giving himself up for the church, did he not sacrifice everything?

His position, his power, his glory, even his life . . .

For the sake of yours, and his relationship with you?

He did – and you should too

Oh how we must die to ourselves every single day in our marriages

Husbands, love your wife that way – sacrificially

➤ Now, the following verses can get a little dicey b/c he switches back and forth between the responsibilities of husbands, and the example of Christ
So let’s sort it out ([v26-27](#))

26-27 – The goal of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, was to set apart (sanctify) for himself, a people (v27) who are pure and without blemish ([read v26a and 27](#))
And he did that (v26; catch this word picture) by cleansing us or saving us from our sin, with the truth of his word – i.e. w/ the promise of forgiveness/salvation
All of which is symbolized by the waters of baptism

That must be what he means when he says that Christ *cleansed us by the washing of water with the word*, otherwise it makes no sense
How do you physically wash someone with *the word*? You don’t
Which clues us in that this *washing with water* is symbolic of our cleansing and forgiveness, not a literal rendering of it
And therefore it most likely refers to baptism

Bottom line? This is a *huge* blessing and encouragement

He loved us sacrificially in order to bless us w/ salvation, & ensure our righteousness

And as husbands, our motive in loving our wives s/b the same

To bless them, not with salvation, that’s not within our capacity – but with praise/honor
And to encourage them toward the righteousness and godliness that Christ promises, having put their faith and trust in him

➤ **Prov 31:28-29** says, after describing the excellent wife . . .

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her; “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”

Husbands, good things happen when you bless your wife with praise

Jesus blessed the church by saving her . . .

And you can bless your wife by praising her

Sacrifice your pride and start offering compliments – tell her what you like about her

You don’t have to write a paper or give a speech . . .

Just mention it as you are going; As they come to mind

It might be awkward at first, but the only way to get past it, is to do it

You say, “Pastor Rob, you don’t know my wife; There’s nothing to praise.”

Listen – If she’s breathing, start there; If she’s still with you, start there

Everyone has something to be praised

And if you can’t think of anything, more than likely you’re blinded by your pride, or wrapped up in your ego

Neither of which is in line with Christ’s example here

Bless your wife with praise and honor

➤ And then *encourage* her in her walk

Encourage her to grow in the righteousness and godliness for which Christ gave his life in the first place (v27)

You see, in salvation, Christ accomplishes our purity and splendor *for* us

And in marriage, we’re to encourage our wives *toward* it

Toward living out what he’s already done, and continues to do

Toward cultivating an inward beauty that far surpasses and outlasts anything outward

The end result of which, is a wife of noble character as Proverbs says – who loves God and loves you

Who doesn’t want that?

Love your wives sacrificially – blessing them and encouraging them toward the very thing for which Christ gave his life in the first place

That’s your role

➤ And then he says in v28 – *In the same way* . . .

That is, with the same *passion* that Christ displayed in saving us . . .

And w/ the same *patience* he displays in purifying us, and completing the work he began . . .

In [that] same way [with passion and patience], husbands should love their wives

And he ends it with – *as their own bodies*

IOW – Husbands, love your wife as a servant-leader, love her sacrificially, love her . . .

• **As yourself (v28-33)**

Which he says explicitly in v33 – *let each one of you love his wife as himself*

But before he gets there, he gives us 3 reasons for doing so . . .

The first of which is – she’s *one* with you; she’s a part of your own body

That’s why in v31 he cites Gen 2:24 – *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*

He cites that to support his statement in v28 that to love your wife is to love yourself

B/c after all, you’re one flesh

Husbands, love your wife as yourself b/c in God’s eyes, she *is* yourself – you’re *one*

Second, love your wife as yourself – b/c to do otherwise would be crazy

It wouldn’t make sense

No one ever hated his own flesh (v29), *but nourishes and cherishes it*

At least no one in their right *mind* hates their own flesh

Which means u’d have to be *out* of yours to do so

You’d be crazy not to nourish and cherish the one w/ whom you’re one

Love her as yourself – b/c you’re one; b/c you’d be crazy not to; and third . . .

B/c that’s what Jesus does – he loves us as *his* own body

29 – *No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church because we are members of his body.*

B/c he loves us as part of his body, we should love our wives as part of ours

That’s what it means to follow Christ in your marriage

➤ Then, just to make sure we don’t miss the main point of all this, he says in v32 . . .

This mystery is profound – this mystery of oneness; this mystery of relationship; this mystery of deep, sacrificial, other-oriented love . . .

It’s profound, and it *refers to Christ and the church*

IOW, as we said in week one of this series, your marriage is not just about you

Rather, it’s primarily meant to display the beautiful unity/intimacy between Christ and the church

And then, having said all that, he comes full circle in v33 to say . . .

However – meaning despite the fact that this is primarily about Christ and the church . . .
Let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

➤ So do you? (**summary slide**)

Do you care for your wife like you do yourself?

Do you nourish her with attention and affection?

Do you cherish her as a gift from God?

Do you protect her emotionally, physically, and spiritually whenever possible?

Do love her with the same fervor and desire and persistence that Christ loves you?

If you do, you’re fulfilling God’s role in marriage – keep on

If you don’t, I hope you start

For your sake, and for her sake, and for Christ’s sake

