

## Fulfill Your Responsibilities! (Part 2) – Eph 5:22-33

Eph 5:22-33; This is the last message in our All Out Of Love marriage series, and part 2 of a message I began last week; A message that focused on the *wife's* side of coin . . . Starting with some **Foundational Principles** that are critical for a proper understanding

Like the fact that . . .

### **Husbands and wives are equal in value and equal in worth**

We have the same privilege as his image bearers, the same access to his presence, and the same inheritance of eternal life; Which makes us equal in value and worth

Not only that, but . . .

### **Husbands and wives are mutually needed and mutually dependent**

We need each other *differently*; But it's nonetheless mutual

And then, w/ that in mind, we launched into our **Core Responsibilities**, and found that . . .

### **Wives – submit to your husband (v22-24)**

As in, voluntarily yield to his discretion and decisions, with *joy*; Not like a passive wallflower, but as his helper and partner

And do so . . .

- **In everything (v24)**
- **As your leader (v23)**
- **As to Christ (v22,24)**
- **With respect (v33)**

That's a wife's core responsibility, and that was last week (**Summary**)

➤ Which brings us to a husband's – the other side of the coin; Eph 5:22-33 (Core)

[22] *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

[25] *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way husbands should love their 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 Christ does the church, [30] because we are members of his body. [31] "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [32] This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. [33] However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

➤ Paul spends 3 verses on the wife's role in marriage, and 8½ verses on the husband's. Why do you think that is? I suppose it could be that we're thick-headed or bull-headed. But more so, I think it's b/c a marriage usually turns or burns, on the husband; On *his* attitude and behavior; Not all the time, but most

So husbands, if you get one thing right in your marriage . . .

### **Husbands – love your wife (v25a)**

That's your core responsibility; And it comes directly fr v25 – *Husbands, love your wives*

As in care for her, and care *about* her; Even when she's not very lovable; Even when she doesn't submit very well; Even though she doesn't show you much respect. If she's your wife, if you said "I do" – love her; Period; That's what it says

➤ What it *doesn't* say, is – Husbands, *rule* over your wife; Or wield your authority; Or *use* your power and position to your advantage. Which you might expect if you read this in a vacuum, or have an attitude of suspicion – b/c v23 says that the husband is the *head* of the wife. But that doesn't mean use and abuse; In fact, it's quite the opposite

3 times in 8 verses, we're told 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 Greek, and conveys an *unconditional* love, independent of her response or performance. So an expanded version of v25 would read – Husbands, show **unwavering, unconditional devotion and affection** to your wife. That's the kind of love God's talking about

➤ And check out the standard Paul cites in v25; Husbands are to love their wives, like *Christ loves the church!*\*\*\*\*\*  
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 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; He-llo. If it weren't for the grace and strength that God provides, we'd be sunk. But thank God he gives it, and all the more as we obey

All the more as you strive to love your wife . . .

### • **As a servant-leader (v25b)**

That's the first aspect of a husband's core responsibility; Love your wife, not just as her leader, but her *servant-leader*; Someone who leads her by serving her. B/c that's exactly what Jesus did; And said so in **Luke 22:27** – *I am among you as the one who serves* [he said]. 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 seeking *our* good instead of his; By protecting *us* instead of himself\*\*\*\*\*

➤ 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; Is God's grace and power and stamina not sufficient for you? Sufficient to sustain you, even when you're being taken advantage of?

"You don't understand, Pastor; I *want* to serve her, but with everything on my plate, I don't have the *energy*"

No, I do understand; I understand that you need to suck it up, get off the couch, and draw on the strength that *God* provides; Literally asking him for help, *in* the moment

Like when she's cleaning the kitchen after dinner, and you want nothing more than to get to the easy chair; "God, help me help her;" That's what you should be praying  
And then get up, and go help; Trusting God for the strength as you do what you should  
Or how about when she's folding the clothes in the middle of the living room, and you're surfing the web? "God, help me help her"  
Or, what if you blew her away by doing it *for* her on occasion? Huh?  
She might fall over dead, but at least she'd die happy

Servant-leaders do the things they don't like, to bless those they do – those they love  
That's the first part of loving your wife, as Christ loved the church

2<sup>nd</sup> is to love her . . .

- **Sacrificially (v25c-27)**

Which comes from the phrase in v25b, that says Christ *gave himself up for her*; He *loved the church and gave himself up for her*  
Meaning, he sacrificed *his* life for *ours*; His glory, for our glory; His position for our position; He gave his *all*, for his bride – the church

And calls us to do the same; To give up our hopes, dreams, desires, wants, wishes, interests, hobbies, aspirations, and goals – for *our* brides  
Husbands, God calls you to give, and give *up, all* – for the sake of your wife; To sacrifice, just like he did; It couldn't be clearer  
*Love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* (25); Sacrificed for her; As *he* did, so should you

➤ One of the best examples of which, is the story of Robertson McQuilkin (**photo**)  
Robertson was President of Columbia International University for over 20 years in the 70's and 80's, but not before he and his wife Muriel were married in 1949 . . .  
And then, after some education, spent 12 years in Japan as missionaries  
Only after that, did they return to the States in 1968 to lead the college  
And God blessed them; Under Robertson's leadership, Columbia International trained thousands of men and women for the work of ministry

But in the early '80s, about 12 years *into* that, Muriel was diagnosed with Alzheimer's – a degenerative disease that includes memory loss, confusion, irritability, fear . . .  
And eventually complete physical debilitation  
And through the gradual worsening of Muriel's condition, Robertson eventually decided to *resign* from his position as president, and care for his wife *full-time*  
And I want you to hear his heart in that, in this recording (**video**) of his resignation speech before the student body

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That was 1990; And 3 years later, she stopped recognizing him; And 10 long years after that, she went home to be with the Lord; For 13 years he cared for her full time  
Not to mention the decade before that  
It's a story that captures the sacrificial nature of a husband's love, as good as any I've ever heard; And I want to be like that; And I hope you do too

➤ But that's not where most of us live, is it? Most of us are grinding it out in the routine of life, where *our* sacrifice, or lack thereof . . .  
Is seen in a multitude of *little* decisions along the way

Decisions that either encourage our wives toward holiness and godliness, or don't  
And that's the very issue Paul addresses next, in v26-27

He says that Jesus gave himself up for the church – [26] *That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

Paul is saying, that the goal of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, was to set apart, or sanctify for himself – a people who are *pure* and without blemish  
And he did that by cleansing us, or washing away our sin, with the truth of his word – the promise of forgiveness and salvation; Applied to our lives by his Spirit

And as husbands, *our* goal should be the same – to *encourage* our wives toward that righteousness and godliness; That's your goal in marriage  
To encourage your wife toward righteousness and godliness  
It's not to make her happy, but holy; If she's holy, she'll *be* happy, she'll *be* joyful; But that's not your goal  
Your goal is her sanctification, her purity, her *splendor* as the verse says  
*Even* if it means sacrifice on your part

That's the 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect of what it means to love her  
In death *and* in life, love your wife sacrificially

And then last, love her . . .

- **As yourself (v28-33)**

That's v28 – *In the same way* [the same way as Jesus] *husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*  
And then he repeats it in v33 – *let each one of you love his wife as himself*  
First in v28, and then in v33; And in between, he gives us 3 reasons for it

1. She's *one* with you; Your wife is a part of your own body  
Which Paul confirms in v31, by citing Gen 2:24 – *the two shall become one flesh*  
Which means, husbands, that you should love your wife as yourself, b/c in God's eyes, *she is* yourself; You're *one*
2. It's the *natural* thing to do  
V29 says – *No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it*  
Just like self-mutilation isn't natural, neither is hating your wife; Or *treating* her like you do; What *is* natural, is nourishing and cherishing her  
And one of the best ways you can do so, is to *praise* her

After describing the excellent wife in Prov 31 (**Prov 31:28-29**), the text says – *Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her*; [saying] *"Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."*  
Do you think she felt cherished? I guarantee she did; B/c wives yearn for praise like that  
Just like husbands yearn for respect

And husbands, you know what you get *apart* from praise? Nothing\*\*\*\*\*  
You get no growth in your relationship; No joy; No encouragement; No desire; No

nothing; Better to nourish and cherish her, just like you do yourself  
Better to praise her, like you praise yourself  
B/c she *is* yourself, and it's the natural thing to do

3. That's what Jesus does – he loves us as *his* own body  
V29-30 – *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 *his* body . . .  
We should love our wives as ours; That's the point; Follow his example

➤ 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 early on in the series, your marriage is not just about you  
Rather, it's primarily meant to display the beauty, unity, and intimacy between Christ  
and the church; It's a picture, and your life is the canvas  
That's primarily what marriage is about

But that doesn't negate the very *practical* aspects, which he ends with  
Saying in v33 – *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. (Summary)*  
Two sides of the same coin of responsibility in marriage

➤ The question is, are you fulfilling them?  
Do you care for your wife like you do yourself? Do you nourish her with attention and  
affection? Do you lead her by serving her? Do love her sacrificially?

And wives – do you submit to him in everything, as your leader, and with respect? Just  
like you do with Jesus?  
If so, you're fulfilling your responsibility; If not, you need to start; Both of you

And we have two ways to help you with that, found on this bulletin **insert**  
In fact, if you'd pull that out, I'd like to draw your attention to it

➤ The first option is for couples who want to *enrich* their marriage by attending a 9 week  
class called *Round The Bases*; It's designed to help you discover areas of need . . .  
And then learn how to develop biblical, God-honoring solutions

And the second, is for couples in crisis; If your marriage needs serious attention, sign up  
to *Get Mentored*; We have over 30 Marriage Mentors . . .  
Trained and ready to meet with you; It's a 10 week process, and it's free; So if you're in  
crisis – check the box; And then, drop your card in the offering . . .  
Or give it to the ushers as you exit – and we'll be sure to get in touch with you

Pray – God, will you break through to husbands with hard hearts? And convince those  
with doubts? Doubts that this is of you, and for their good; And spur those on who love  
these truths as much as any other, helping them to fulfill their responsibilities  
And find us giving now with glad and generous hearts