

Biblical Principles of Marriage (Part 8) – Eph 5:22-33

Eph 5:22-33; It's good to be in the house of God on this 4th of July weekend; We have much to be thankful for in this country, and much to pray for including the institution of marriage – a long-standing pillar in our society. It's something we've been focusing on for 8 weeks now, and this is the last of it; The 8th and final message

And having found last week that husbands and wives are *equal* in value and worth, and *mutually* dependent on one another, we also found that . . .

Principle #8 – Wives should submit to their husband (v22-24)

That was principle #8; Voluntarily yield to the discretion and decisions of your husband, with *joy*; Not like a passive wallflower, but an active partner; That was last week

➤ This week, is the *husband's* responsibilities; The part all the wives have been *waiting* for; And quite frankly, the part that's least observed. I think more *husbands* fail in their responsibility, than wives; I really do. So it bears some attention; Which God gives, right here in Eph 5

[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.*

➤ Notice here, that Paul spends 3 verses on the *wife's* role in marriage, and 8½ verses on the husband's; Could he be telling us something? I think so. That a marriage usually turns or burns on the husband; On *his* attitude and behavior; Not all the time, but most; I think that's the reason for the disproportionate coverage

So husbands, if you get one thing right in your marriage, one principle out of all of them – make it this one

Principle #9 – Husbands should love their wife (v25a)

Love her; It's something you'd think goes without saying, but God knows our hearts; That we're prone to wander; And prone to be selfish

So he gives it as a command; v25 – *Husbands, love your wives*

As in care for her, and care *about* her

Even when she's not very loveable; Even when she doesn't submit very well

Even when 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 *rule* over her; Subjugate her; Oppress her; Keep her under your thumb; That may be your *tendency* as a by-product of the Fall (Gen 3:16). And the *inclination* of your sin nature; But it's not God's *design*; And never was

He expects you to *love* your wife; Saying so 3 times in 8 verses – Love her, love her, and love her

Not in some sappy sort of way; Or conditionally – only when *she* loves you

But in a devoted sort of way; Independent of her response; Independent of her reciprocation; That's what the word *means* here

So an *expanded* version of v25 would read – Husbands, love your wives . . .

• **With unwavering, unconditional devotion and affection**

That's the idea; That's the kind of love *God's* talking about

Devotion *and* affection; Affection *and* devotion; Duty *and* delight

What he's not talking about is a *convenient* love; Where you express it only when you *feel* like it; Only when you're happy with her; Only when you're in the mood. It's *all* the time; And unwavering; Convenient or not

➤ And, it's unconditional; Which is just the *opposite* of what *many* husbands think. “I wouldn't have a *problem* loving her if she'd just submit”
“Why would I treat *her* right if she doesn't treat me right?”
Is that you? If so, the answer to that question, is b/c that's what Jesus does for you

Why would you treat her right if she doesn't treat you right?

B/c that's what Jesus does for us; That's the love he models for the church

It's unwavering and unconditional

➤ And the thing is, he expects the same from you and me; Look at v25 again. *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church*
Just like he loves *us* with an unwavering, unconditional devotion and affection, we are to love our *wives* with an unwavering, unconditional devotion and affection. *Independent* of her submission; Just like Christ loves us independent of ours

He expects it, husbands; And I think it's time that some of you re-kindle it; Refresh it; Recommit to it

And you can; You can do it; I don't care what the state of your marriage is

B/c God never calls us to a standard that he doesn't empower us to reach

In the strength that he supplies, you can do it; *Love* your wife

And do so, 2nd . . .

• **As a servant-leader (v23; Lk 22:27)**

That's the *second* part of your responsibility as a husband

V23 says that *the husband is the head of the wife*; Meaning, that he is her authority and leader; Not in the sense of a drill sergeant who barks out orders . . .

But a servant who makes life easier; Someone who leads the way and prepares the path, for those who are following; Biblical headship means servanthood

B/c once again, that's exactly what Jesus did as *our* head; And said so in . . .

Luke 22:27 – *I am among you as the one who serves*. He was *servant-leader*

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

Including husbands in marriages

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*****

➤ It's like the tribal guys in the jungles of Papua New Guinea when we were over there
As we walked on some of the jungle paths, they preceded us to make sure it was clear
of danger – which we were very thankful for considering the pythons and centipedes
They made it safer

And sometimes they would wield their machetes to hack the vines or branches; Making it
easier for us to follow

IOW they led us by serving us, and served us by leading us; Making *our* journey easier
and safer; The very thing God has in mind for your *wife*, as you lead *her*

➤ Unfortunately, being a servant-leader in the context of your marriage, isn't *nearly* that
cool; I mean, hey – if it was all about blazing a trail through the jungle . . .
I wouldn't even have to preach about it
We'd be like – “Ya man; Give me the machetes and let's go; Just point the way Sweet-
pea; I'm your Popeye”

But that's not where we live, is it?

Our servant-leadership happens in the kitchen; When she's cleaning up, and you want
nothing more than to get to the easy chair

Or in the living room when she's folding clothes and you're surfing the web

Or on the weekend when she's stressed with the kids, and you want to golf

Or at the end of a day when she needs your attention to help with a decision

Those things are a *long way* from the jungle, and not *nearly* as sexy; But the trail of life is
still hard, and dangers still lurk, men

And your wife needs a husband *here*, just like they need one there

Someone who leads her by serving her, and serves her by leading her; Someone who
does things you *don't* like, to bless the one you do; Love her as a *servant-leader*

3rd, love her . . .

• **Sacrificially (v25-27)**

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* all, for us

And calls *us* to do the same; To give up our hopes, dreams, wants, wishes, interests,
hobbies, aspirations, and goals – for our wives

Husbands, God calls you to give, and give *up*, everything; Everything; Just like he calls
your wife to *submit* in everything

It's what Jesus did for *us*, and it's what he expects us to do for our wives; It couldn't be
clearer

Love your wives [v25 says], as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her;
Sacrificed *everything* for her

➤ I gotta tell you, my Dad is living this out before my very eyes these days
My mom is in the early stages of Alzheimer's, and combined with the side effects of the
pain medication that she takes for her back, life is becoming more and more difficult
So they recently decided to sell the farm and move to Nashville; Closer to family

Which may not *sound* like much, but for my Dad, it's a sacrifice

B/c it's the death of a dream; Living on some land, tinkering with the tractors, hunting
at will, and blessing others; That's his element; And he's giving it up
Sacrificing what *he* holds dear, to better care for his wife whom he loves
And few things spur me on more, to do the same; To love *my* wife sacrificially; For
better *or* for worse; In health *and* in sickness

➤ But once again, that's not where most of us live; 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; Seemingly inconsequential decisions

But they add up; And either *dis*-courage our wives toward holiness and godliness, or
en-courage them; And that's the *point* of the sacrifice
It's not just for the sake of health, or well-being, or happiness in your wife; But
godliness; Christlikeness; *Sanctification*; V26-27

Jesus gave himself up for the church – [26] *That* [indicating that what follows is the
reason for the sacrifice] *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.

➤ 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
Which is applied to our lives by his Spirit, through faith and repentance
That's the *gist* of these verses

And as a husband, *your* goal should be the same – to *encourage* your wife toward that
righteousness and godliness

To *expose* her to the cleansing truth of God's Word

To see her *grow* in the beauty of holiness and purity

That's *your* goal – her sanctification; *Even* if it means your sacrifice; *Even* if it means
giving up everything

Love her with an unwavering, unconditional devotion and affection; Love her as a
servant-leader; And love her sacrificially

And then last, love her . . .

• **As yourself (v28-33)**

Love your wife as yourself; V28

In the same way [the same way as Jesus, like we just described] . . .

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*
Love and care for her as you do your *own* body, and love her like you love yourself,
prefer yourself, think of yourself
2 bookends to frame his point

And in between, he gives us 3 reasons:

1. She's one with you

Your wife is a part of your own body; Do you realize that? She is
And Paul confirms it in v31, by citing Gen 2:24 – *the two shall become one flesh*
He quotes Genesis, to support his statement in v28, that *he who loves his wife loves himself*; B/c the two, are one
Just like God commanded and ordained at the beginning of time
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
B/c once again, she's a part of you; She's one with you

And 3rd, love your wife as yourself, b/c . . .

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; 3 reasons (**Summary**)

➤ 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, selfless love
It's profound, and it *refers* [Paul says] *to Christ and the church*

IOW, your marriage is not just about you

In fact, it's *primarily* meant to display the beauty, unity, and intimacy between Christ
and the church; That's the *main* point
Which makes marriage a picture, and your life, the canvas

Your relationship as husband and wife, is a life-size mural of Christ's relationship with us,
the church; Giving tangible, everyday expression to an intangible, glorious truth
That's *primarily* what marriage is about; It's a picture of us and Jesus, as one

➤ But that doesn't negate the very *practical* aspects that he *ends* with; Saying in v33 . .
However [as in, 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 in marriage – love and respect
And 2 principles on which to *base* your marriage, for a life built to last

Pray – God, forgive us of our failures in these things; Wash us anew with the truth of your
word and the grace of your forgiveness; And find us faithful to live it out
We give now, with glad and generous hearts, for all that you've given us; Whether it's
the advantages of being single, or the joys of being married

Close – **Welcome Packet; Elder; 4th of July**

As you celebrate the 4th of July, be sure to thank God for the men and women of the
past, who based their lives on his design and fashioned our country to reflect it
And then ask God for more; More men and women who do the same in the present
Then and only then can we expect the favor of the past, to continue in the future