

A Spiritually Medicated Heart Stent for Men Part 2

Ephesians 5:25-33

This morning we're going to add one more S to our list, it comes from Ephesians 5:25-33. I believe with all of my heart that every man here that sits under the preaching of God's word comes into the marriage with a fear and it's how can I ever live up to what Ephesians 5:25-33 says? I want to say to you as men, this is not a passage that I want to use as a passage to beat us up as men but a passage we've got to look at freshly and with everything within us, we've got to attain not only of the memory, and to meditation but the mastering of what these verses teach. Will you as men listen afresh with me, I know we've probably preached this 100 times since you've been in this church but it's still fresh and it's an awesome passage. For this passage teaches us that our wives need us to not only be strong, to be studious and to be sensitive, but she needs us to be selfless.

Ephesians 5:25, the word of God says to us: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that, verse 26, He might sanctify her having cleansed her with washing of water with the word, 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. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own body. He who loves himself for no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes it and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of His body. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church, however, let each one of you love his wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband." Context, this thought is in a passage where Paul is teaching us how we as Christians are to live wisely in the world. The way we do that is by redeeming the time by staying under the control of God's Holy Spirit and then Paul gives 5 participles that describe what a spirit filled life looks

like and 1 of the characteristics of a spirit filled life is that there will be a mutual submissiveness of Christians to other Christians. Not a feeling of superiority in the body but a feeling of oneness. He then begins to tell us how that spirit filled life that begins in worship transforms the church not only from within the walls of the church but it transforms society outside the walls of the church. He talks about the husband wife-relationship, and he talks about the parent-child relationship and he talks about the servant-master relationship and in each relationship he talks first to the one who is to be under the authority of the other. Therefore he talks about the wife first, then he talks about the child first, then he talks about the servant first. So in verses 22-24 as a first sign of this mutual submissiveness that takes place in the body of Christ, when a woman who is touched by God in the public worship of Him and she's under the control of the Holy Spirit, when she steps outside of the church facilities, she finds herself submitting to the authority of her husband and we're going to talk about that next Sunday. When Paul finishes telling the wife to submit to her husband in everything to the Lord and reminding her of who he is to her, Paul then begins instructing the husband, and I've got to be totally honest with you if we had read this for the first time it would have startled us, it would have surprised us because Paul doesn't say what we expect him to say. See if we could be in a strange culture reading the Bible for the first time, if we just heard Paul telling the wife to submit to the husband, we'd expect Paul to say this to the husband, "husbands, boss your wives", well maybe not that strong. "Husbands, tell her what to do and what not to do because you are the head of the home!" "Husbands, demonstrate your authority, be the lord you are at home!" That's not what Paul says, after just telling the wives to submit to the husband because he's the head, you know what Paul says? "Husbands, love your own wives", wow...You see a husband must be strong, he must be studious, he must be sensitive, but he also must be selfless.

See, you need to remember that in Greek society we have much evidence of where despite the culture, Greek teachers, Greek leaders, Greek

philosophers reminded the husbands to love the wife but never once in ancient Greek literature did we ever see anyone ever tell a man what Paul told a man. Normally when the secular Greeks talked about the relationship between the husband and wife they used the word *Philia*, "husbands, *philia* your wives", "husbands, when you have a need that arises that you need to get met, you love your wife and she'll meet that need back". Because in a *philia* relationship, there's giving and getting, I give, I get back, it's a reciprocal relationship, it cannot stand unless both give and both get. From archeology we have seen where ancient's actually told men to "*Eros* your wife", have a sexual passion for her, take her as your own, burn for her, but never until the church was a man told to *agape* his wife. *Agape* being that love that rises not because the lover has a need, but because the one being loved has a need. A love that was in the Greek society, but the Greek's didn't use it because they just didn't know what to do with this word. Then the church birthed out of that culture, picked up on that word and then applied it to the love God has for us, and he tells the husband to *agape* his wife. Love her because she has needs; don't just love her because you have needs. But you know, I can handle that, but you know Paul just wouldn't stop would he? He just had to make sure us thick-skinned men got it, so what did he say to us? "As Christ *agape* the church" and he didn't stop there, "and gave Himself up for her". I believe with all of my heart that the number one need of a wife is to be loved unconditionally by her husband. Men this is an imperative verb, which means Paul is not throwing it out for discussing, he's not suggesting something, he's commanding an action. An action that 24/7, 7 days a week, 365 and yes that ¼ day also for the rest of your married life. Never taking a vacation, never getting a break, present tense meaning you don't just do it, you continue to do it throughout the marriage. You meet her every need as Christ met our every need.

How did he do that? Paul makes sure we know He gave Himself up. These words gave Himself up literally means to deliver up to or to deliver over to. It's the picture of Christ on the cross laying His life down because of the

depth of a need we could not meet on our own, and that is to be made right with God. But I think we all know that Him laying His life down, giving Himself up, it started long before the cross did it not? Did it not start when He left His Father? He stepped into time in a body just like ours, and every day of His life He laid His life down for you and for me, and that's the command that we've been given, to be selfless in our relationship with our wife. I heard about a couple that on their 50th wedding anniversary were interviewed and was asked what the success to 50 years of marriage and he said it's simple, "I've tried not to be selfish, because I know there's not an i in marriage". They turned to the woman and asked her what her secret was and she said "well I've never corrected his spelling". Guys, in marriage there's not an i. In this stage of marriage, marriage is not about you or me, marriage must be about her. I promise you when you start thinking of marriage from your prospective, your heart isn't soft and tender and having the full blood flow of Jesus Christ flowing to it. When that artery is opened and you're receiving from your relationship with Jesus what you need, that spiritual oxygen, your heart pumps for her and there is a laying of your life down.

Cyrus, king of Persia, had many generals and this story comes down to us through history that one day one of his generals was on the battlefield and while he was on the battlefield his wife was caught in a treacherous, treasonous act. She was awaiting to stand before King Cyrus himself when word reached the battlefield that his wife was going to be tried by the king. He abandoned his troops and he came home and he got to the palace just in time to see her on the floor in front of the king. He burst into throne room and threw himself down in front of her and he pled with King Cyrus that no matter what treacherous, treasonous act she had done, please take his life instead. History says that King Cyrus was stunned because in the Persian world no man had ever seen a husband love that way. Now after a few minutes of silence he pardoned the woman and gave her back to his general as wife. As they were leaving the throne room, history says he turned to her and said, "did you see the look of the king's face when he

pardoned you”, and she said “no I never saw his face, I only saw the face of the man who said he would lay his life down for me”.

A lady told her husband, “I know you would lay your life down for me but while you’re waiting, would you help me fold the clothes”? Men, we’re not talking about an act of bravery here where you shield her from a burglar, we’re talking about daily dying to self and elevating her to that place of priority in your life to where you look at her and you make an evaluation and you elevate that need to a place of priority in your life and you live your life to meet that need as Christ did. Why did Christ do what He did? Look at verse 26 and 27, now guys remember that in verse 28 it’s going to say, “in the same way”, so we guys are expected to love our wives the same way Christ loved the church and Paul didn’t leave it up to us to make our own interpretation, he lays out 3 purposes in the love of God. You say how do you know that? Because in the Greek language there are 3 purpose phrases, *hina* phrases, all translated by the English word “that”. In English we use “that” as a purpose word, you’ve got a sentence and it’s talking about an action and it says “so that” or “that”. It’s telling you that what’s getting ready to happen is what we’ve been talking about. Why did Christ lay Himself down, why did he deliver Himself up, so “that He might sanctify the church, having cleansed her by the washing with the word”. The word sanctify literally means to make holy, but the word holy in its primary meaning, means to make a separation, to set apart. Many biblical commentaries believe this is not a reference to baptism but it’s a reference to the ancient bridal bath, where the wife on the wedding day would be bathed, cleansed as she entered into a relationship with her husband to be his forever. With that thought, as we husbands lay our lives down for our wives and live selfless, her more, less self, more her, our love sets her apart, it makes her different than any other woman in our lives. I believe with all of my heart, the bible teaches Christ loves His own differently than He loves those who are not His own. Can you accept that? God doesn’t love us all equally, Jesus Christ loves His bride the most and His love set us apart. What did His love set us apart from? His love set us, the church

apart from the world of sinner and His love made us different, amen? And that's obvious.

What does this mean to you and me as a man? Our love, if it's like Christ will set her apart from every other woman in our lives, starting with our mother, down to our daughters and every other woman who comes into our life, because the number one need in a woman's life is unconditional love, usually. I spend a lot of time counseling women who are in bad marriages and one of the first things they always tells me is "he loves his mother more than he loves me". Sometimes, depending on what stage of the marriage they're in, there comes a time I hear the lady say, "if he just loved me the way he loves his daughters"! Then I will call the man in and I'll say "she believes your kids more than you love her" and he says, "Well, I do"! And he looks at me with that dumb look, like he's supposed to! That's when I want to get out of the pastoral chair and crawl across the desk and just give it to him! Are you guys listening to me? You've got a heart problem, you love mama more and you've got a heart problem, you love your daughters more than you love your wife! Your relationship with her should set her apart so that everyone will know there is no equal to her in your life. Why, because your love has set her apart among women, she is "fine china" compared to the other dishes in your life. "So that", so that what? Why does a man set his wife apart from all other women? So that he might present her to himself in splendor, in glory, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, wow! Guys, do you understand this? When you love her selflessly and you set her apart among all the ladies in your life, what you are doing is presenting her back to yourself without spot, wrinkle or blemish or any such thing.

Now I know this is going to be sensitive but we've just got to be honest, scripture teaches, not Bro Ricky, that when we get our wives from their parents, they don't come to us in splendor, they don't come to us in glory, they come to us with wrinkle and spots and a lot of other junk in their life. Why, because she got a little bit of her genetics from him and a little bit from her, mom and dad, and for some reason when your mom and dad

came together and birthed you, a woman, and their genetics didn't produce a perfect child. You're a mess, and it's your mom and dad's fault and they didn't figure out in time how to deal with you properly, so when they gave you to your husband, you had wrinkles, spots and blemishes. Now I want you to know this, they figured it out after you left home how to parent, and that's why all of us parents are such great grandparents, amen! It's because we finally figured it out! But we didn't figure it out in time for you, and yesterday in a wedding, Kory said to Kara's dad, who gives this woman to this man to be married and he and his wife presented Kara to Cody and Cody received a bride. I received from the hand of TG Curd my wife, at the age of 17. At 17 there were some spots, wrinkles and blemishes; Celisa knows that, I know that, you know that. Do you know what? If the Lord doesn't come back until October 21st as that preacher says now, it wasn't May 21st, it's October 21st, he says May 21st was the just the spiritual judgment, Christ came and spiritually judged the world and He's really coming back on October 21st, so Celisa and I, if we don't die will celebrate 31 years of marriage. Do you realize she will have lived for me 31 years and only with her parents for 17? I liked who she was at 17, if I do not like who she is today, it's not TG and Shirley's fault, it's mine. Have you guys ever instead of spending a little more, have you tried to save money and it broke down and someone come along and said you got what you paid for? Meaning this might not have happened if you had given a little more. I want to say to every man here, you're getting what you've loved for. If you've been married, 8, 10, 15, 20, 25, 35 years, unless there's a real genetic deformity, what you have is how you've been loving. Your wife is a product of you and your love for her because your love is like a detergent, it removes the spots. Your love is like a hot iron, it removes the wrinkles. Why? So that she might be holy and without blemish, now watch this.

In the sanctifying process of the marriage, a presentation is taking place where the man is getting according to how he loves, watch this. So in the first stages of marriage the man must be into her, and all about her, and

as he's all about her, because wasn't Christ all about us in the sanctifying process? But then what happens in the sanctifying process, we become what, holy and without blemish. And when we get to heaven and sit down at the family table, Jesus is going to be at the head of the table. Jesus is all about us right now, but when we get to heaven we're not going to be about us, who are we going to be about? We're going to be about Jesus! In the marriage if the man will do it right, and be about her, when she becomes holy and without blemish, guess who she'll be about? She'll be all about you, amen? Don't look at me like that, that was good! But you know what happens in the marriage? A man wants it to be about him, and because he wants it to be about him, she can never get over the wrinkles, spots and blemishes and be about him. But if you'll be about her, sanctify her, love her with the love of Christ, I promise you, one day she will be all about you.

"In the same way husbands should love their own bodies". Men, don't you ever love another man's body, ever! Do you hear me? If you ever have that thought, you stop it right there in the thought life. The only woman you can love, under God, is your own body, why, because she's you. We men have got to understand this, this is not grammatically correct, but we is 1, not 2. She is me, I am her, she's is my body. Can I say this to every man here, Paul in this passage never tells the man he's the head, never, so get over being the head. The focus of your life is not about you, the head. As a matter of fact, the only reason we know that we're the head is through the analogy, because Paul told the wife we are the head. She knows who we are, we're the head, but he didn't tell us, you know what he told us? He told us who she is, not who we are. You know who she is? She's the body. You know who you are? You have a body, and that's you, you should not know where you end and she begins because you are so connected, you are so one. Here's what Paul says, and I've struggled with this for years, I'm glad I'm finally coming to maturity but I still don't believe I've arrived. Paul says no man ever hated his own body. Now I've never really like the one I've got, I'm talking about physically. I never made it to

5 ft 9; do you realize what kind of life you've led if you don't even make it to 5 ft 9? You can't be a professional basketball player, you can't be a middle line backer, especially when you entered high school and still weighed 99 lbs. You know, you're short, cute and light, but I don't hate my body. You see the word hate, I mean I dislike some things about it, but the word for hate here means to detest, to abhor, to reject. What he's saying is no man ever neglected his body to the place of starvation or ruin physically, not intentionally. What does a guy do? He feeds it, that's what it means to nourish, you feed your body, you bring it to maturity, you educate it, you train it, you do the best with what you've got and you cherish it. This word cherish means to make warm. It's the opposite of to be left cold. Now what am I supposed to do? I never reject or abandon my wife, she's my body. But you know what I do, when I recognize that we're one, that she's me and I'm her, here's what I do. I feed her, I nourish her, I take care of her, and I help bring her to spiritual maturity. I help her to develop her into the woman that God's ordained her to be, I warm her, I make her hot, and I don't leave her out in the cold!

Now I don't know what kind of body you guys have, but I just want to say this on the record, you know this to be true, physically it seems like God made women colder than men, agreed? My wife freezes everywhere she goes. When we used to go to the lake she didn't take her sweatshirt off until July 31st, and then August 2nd she's putting it back on! Yesterday we got dressed up to come to the wedding and she put on a dress that I had never seen before and whoa, when she put it on I said hon, we're not going to the rehearsal, I'm taking you to the Brass Lantern. And wow, when it was over we went into the Brass Lantern and when we were walking in she said to the hostess, could you put us in the hottest corner of the restaurant. I'm thinking wow; this is going to be a nice romantic meal! Do you know where they took us? They took us in the corner and there were 6 air conditioner vents on that wall. We hadn't been there 2 minutes and do you know what I doing? I'm going back out in the truck and I'm getting my suit coat and I'm bringing it in and I wrap it around my wife.

Because she can't enjoy eating with me if she's freezing, so I wrap my coat around her. You know what I discovered early this morning? The word cherish means to warm up. You know what a husband's love for his wife ought to do? It ought to wrap her in layers so that she can warm up and be the lady God has ordained her to be. Husbands, we need to wrap her, we need to clothe her, we need to clothe her with words of affirmation, and words of admiration, we need to wrap her in eyes that give her our undivided attention, we need to wrap her in blankets of affection, we need to wrap her and clothe her to the point so that she knows we accept her as she is and if she never changes we're still glad we're stuck with her. She needs to know that we're always available to her first, instead of her living in a world where she's frozen! We can prepare her to be the woman God's designed her to be and suddenly you'll wake up one day and realize you're married to a holy, without blemish, Christ-like lady who seems to never be about her, but she's always about you. Let's be strong, let's be studious, let's be sensitive, but let's be selfless. Guys let's meditate on this but above all, let's master it.