

The Biblical Roles of a Husband (Part 1: Eph. 5:25-33)

Today's sermon is very practical; I hope. The larger topic of this sermon series is marriage. Marriage, unlike ANY institution on earth, is designed to display the glory of God as He shows his love for his people, in saving them from their sins, and making them holy. In Rev. 21:2 we see the end, the result of God's marriage to his people. The Apostle John writes: "**And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband . . .**" I think of Jesus' great prayer in John 17 as he prays for his bride, his people. And he prays that they will be ONE, that "**the glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one**" (John 17:22). Jesus is preparing us for heaven, to present us as holy! With this in mind, I would like to preach a sermon about the role of the husband in marriage. In Eph. 5:25-27 we read these words: "**Husbands, love your wives, as Christ 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, 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.**" Now, we know these verses speak particularly about the great work of the Gospel. Jesus Christ died for sinners. He laid down his life as a sacrifice in the place of those who are not holy. He exchanges his righteousness for our sins. And He will present us HOLY to the Father. Now, husbands, we cannot make our wives holy in this sense. Only Christ can do that. However, these verses teach us that, in our marriage, one of the end goals of the husband is the holiness of his wife. Therefore, we need this passage and this truth to help us make our wives more beautiful! I have 3 truths over the next two weeks; only 1 today.

1. Husband, Love Your Wife. Eph. 5:25: "**Husbands, love your wives . . .**" It is mentioned 3 times in this text. It must be important. It is! In fact, this is the first of the ten commandments for the husband! Love your wife! I find it very interesting that Paul doesn't say to the wife, "*love your husband.*" Now, this doesn't mean that wives are not supposed to love their husbands. Of course they do, and they must! But, the emphasis here is LOVE. Husbands, our wives need our love. There is a direct relation between the love of a husband and the beauty of his wife. Now, I am primarily speaking of internal beauty, the beauty of the heart. However, this may also extend to external beauty (another topic). Husbands, if you have been married for 10 years, your wife SHOULD grow in godliness, in character, in ways that go way beyond physical beauty. Now, you may ask, "*What does this look like?*" The answer is given in our text: "**As Christ loved the church . . .**"

Christ is the GREAT LOVER of his people. And because he loved, he came to do the Father's will to beautify his love, his wife, his bride, the church. Paul says, "**This truth is profound . . .**" (v. 32). No matter the cost, no matter the road, no matter the difficulties, husbands are to love their wives. In John 12:27, speaking of the cross, Jesus says, "**Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.**" Literally, heaven and earth could not move the love of Christ for his church. And, this is evident in what he did. We see no greater example of love in action than the love of Christ. Husbands, consider his love!

His love is sacrificial. Think of what He gave up in heaven. "**Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form,**

he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). His love is selfless. He did not **"come to be served, but to give his life a ransom for many"** (Mark 10:45). His love is costly as he **"endured the cross,"** (Heb. 12:2) the worst form of torture and death known to man at that time. Could there have been a more difficult task? His love is persistent. All his life his face was **"set toward Jerusalem"** (Luke 9:53). His love is consistent. For with him **"there is no shadow of turning"** (James 1:17). His love continues to the end. Even as he prayed, **"Lord, let this cup pass before me,"** he says, **"Nevertheless, thy will be done"** (Matt. 26:42). And, he loves with great joy. Heb. 12: 2 says, **"With the joy set before him, he endured the cross . . ."**

And the greatest difficulty was not the physical aspect of the cross, but the wrath of God being poured out upon him. Is. 53:10 says, **"It was the will of the Father to bruise the son."** The physical part of the cross leading to death, was NOTHING in comparison to full wrath of God that landed squarely upon the Son! And, He was undeserving. He did not die as a sinner. He died an innocent man. Why? So that he could take our punishment. So that he could die in our place. So that he could exchange his righteousness for our unrighteousness. Why? **"that He might sanctify his bride . . . 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"** (vv. 26-27). And even more, consider that his love was for his enemies. **"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"** (Rom. 5:8). **"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life"** (Rom. 5:10). Oh, the beautiful love of Christ displayed in the cross!

So far, I am ONLY thinking of the cross, which is the greatest example of love. I am not mentioning ALL the ways He helps us now as a good husband, as He give us the Holy Spirit and stands beside us as a friend, a helper, a sustainer, the One who loves us every second of every moment; as the ONE who leads us to heaven, through life's difficulties. For a **"bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench"** (Is. 42:3). And I am not considering all the other beautiful qualities of Christ such as his humility, his servanthood, his patience, his power, his wisdom, etc.; ALL find their source in his love for his bride. At the end of the day, Christ **"gave himself for us."** He gave ALL of himself. Husbands, this must be our example, our model. And this begins with our motive and moves to our actions as we consider our role as a loving husband with the goal of making our wives beautiful.

Now, Christ is our example. But, Paul knows us, and he comes down to our level for application. Look at vv. 28-29: **"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 . . ."** culture says, *"Love yourself more."* *"Only if you love yourself more, can you love others."* However, Paul agrees with the overwhelming truth of Scriptures which says that we already love ourselves enough. And this obvious. James says, **"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel . . ."** (James 4:1-2). Husbands, I can assure US of this truth: Our marital problems find their root in self. I am the problem! Husband, you are the problem! (Wives, don't think too much of yourselves either as we will address much of the same in a couple weeks.) At the end of the day, I do what I want to do; and this greatly affects my marriage.

I have an example. Do you like my beard? (No shave November) It is new. And after having it a few weeks now, it may be more trouble than it's worth. I spend time trimming it (unlike some of you), putting oil on it, looking at it in the mirror. Why? For whatever reasons, it is part of me and my desires. I'm not going to shave part of it and leave the rest. At least for now, I will not neglect this part of my body, my face. (though I'll probably listen to my wife soon and shave it off.) In the same way, as I care for myself and my beard, so must I care for my wife; love my wife that she also might be beautiful.

What do you do when you try to be a good husband, but you think your wife isn't doing the same thing on her side? How should you approach this biblically? Again, Christ is our example. Ask yourself, what did the church look like when he came to her? (Consider Ezekiel 16). We were rebellious wives, seeking our own way, doing our own thing. And as we've seen. We were not friendly to our husband. We were "by nature, children of wrath" (Eph. 2). Christ did not find us very lovely! He makes us lovely. Rom. 5:6-8 says, "**For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" In the same way, in reference to sin, your wife may not be so beautiful. But, love her you must! You are responsible for her loveliness!

How do we do this? First, we do this through the power that Christ gives. Loving our wives must flow from a heart that loves Christ, that loves this Word, that loves his instructions, etc. Then, duty in this way becomes a delight! I am not saying hard days, weeks, and even years are not in the future of your marriage (for they are). Marriage is hard work. But I am saying, your ability to be a good husband is directly related to your union with Christ. "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15).

In the end, Husbands, we cannot beautify our wives. Only Christ can do that to any of us, as marriage is this picture. But, I believe we must do everything we can to make our wives beautiful. And this is done through character. This is done as WE live godly before our wife and before our children. If this is not what is happening, we may be more destructive than helpful. This is so important for us to understand. A good example is a house. What happens over time if you don't put time, effort, money into the upkeep. What will this house look like after 20 or 30 years? WE MUST do what it takes to make our wives beautiful. Husband, you are responsible for the loveliness of your wife. Nowhere I know of in Scripture puts this emphasis on the wife. "*A man who does not take particular and tender care of his wife, and who then expects her to be fruitful and lovely, is not being a true husband at all.*"

Now, for the rest of our time, I want to spend some time on application. Let me begin by reading just a few suggestions from Wayne Mack as he gives practical examples of what this looks like in the home. (*Homework Manual for Biblical Living*, pp. 42-45). You may express love to your wife by . . .

Question/Application: What if your wife does not have an inner heart of beauty? I really do believe this will be rare if a husband does what we've been talking about. But, we know, at the end of the day, God is the one who changes the heart. Therefore, we continue to do the things

I've mentioned. We love. We live in an understanding way. We lead. And we do this because our own hearts have been changed and we know this is our duty. We do it because God commands it from us. We do it because by doing so, we reflect and picture the beauty of Christ as He loves and beautifies his bride, his people, the church. We also pray! More and more, pray, if your wife's heart is far from Christ. And we trust God will work. This is God's way! God will get the glory!

Application: What if, after listening to this sermon, you find yourself not so faithful in this duty . . . and in your heart? I promise you, if you've really listened to this sermon, at some level, you find yourself here, either from simply not knowing these truths, or willingly, knowingly, neglecting this command because your own selfishness . . . "*You love what you love . . . yourself.*" Well, Repent, now these truths have been made clear. Confess your sins to God, to your wife. Ask God to change your heart in this area. Start to change little things in the coming days that you may make your wife more beautiful. Seek out accountability. Get with a brother and ask one another hard questions. Talk to your wife. Ask her how you can love better, how you can be more understanding, how you can lead her.

Application: Fathers, lead your sons to be good husbands. We do this by example. Husbands, the best place to display the gospel is in your home to your children. They are your number one disciples. And if marriage is the best picture of Christ's love for his church, then, the home is the best place to make this picture come alive. You are a pebble that reflects the Rock that is Christ.

Application: It is so important that we marry believers. Show me a Christian man who does these things with a Christian wife, and I will show you a beautiful woman.

Application: The greater responsibility in marriage falls upon the husband. Be a man! Be a husband! No matter what the cost! No matter how unlovely is your wife.

Application: Young women, as you consider marriage one day, look for the kind of man I have been speaking of. Young men, if God is willing, you will be a husband one day. Therefore, take heed to this advice. It is so important.

I really hope these words from Scripture are helpful as we try to be good husbands, and raise up good husbands for the church and for the world. Let's pray.

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