
Ephesians 5:22-33
Battle of the Sexes Part 2
The Husband's Responsibility

As we continue to look at the passages on marriage found in Ephesians 5, I believe that I am walking into an area where even angels fear to tread.

There are a lot of emotions when it comes to marriage. There are a lot of expectations on both sides, from husbands and from wives. There is a lot of miscommunication, misunderstanding and confusion as to each other's role and how spouses are relate to each other.

It didn't used to be that way in marriage did it? When you were dating and in the first years of marriage things went pretty smoothly. You related to each other easily and well. You enjoyed each other's company and couldn't wait to be in each other's company.

But somewhere along the line that infatuation with your spouse may have ended. You got to know each other by spending a great amount of time with each other. You began to let your guard down and your faults and quirks were seen and maybe not appreciated. Kids came along, challenges in life and many other things began to put pressure on your marriage.

What to do? Where to seek marital advice? Well, we have come to the right place, to the word of God. This passage we are looking at has a lot of instruction to the wives and to the husbands about the designs of marriage put in place by God.

Last week I spoke about the responsibility of the wives, this week, we will look at the responsibility of the husbands.

Before we do, let's go backwards one verse and look at verse 21 of Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5:21, “Submit to one another out of a reverence for Christ.”

This pretty well sums it up doesn't it? We are to be in mutual submission one to another. This passage is not usually placed within this teaching on marriage but speaks on how each Christian is to interact with each other, whether male or female. That is one of the things Jesus, during His time on earth did, elevate the position of a woman to a fellow heir, on the same plane as men.

Putting women on the same level as men was pretty radical in Jesus' day because it was a male dominated society where women were seen as bearer of children and keepers of the home. Jesus came and changed that. But just as human nature has a tendency to revert back to its fleshy ways, so too has marriage went backwards from God's design in a lot of ways.

It is hard to believe that some of your grandmothers were not allowed to vote, speak in public, inherit property or even be a legal citizen. We have come a long way haven't we? In some ways though, I think maybe we have come a little bit too far to the left. I think once again we have gotten out of balance in the relationship of what God has called a man to be and for a woman to be and for what they are to be in the union of marriage.

So where do we go? To the word of God don't we? We don't look for our views to be shaped by modern society, what the world says is right. We go to the word of God. Let's do that now.

I wanted us to read together this passage in its entirety and then we'll see if we can pull some teaching for the men out of it. Look with me.

Ephesians 5:22-33, “²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” (NIV)

Let’s pray

As you can see I have underlined the commandments of husbands, love your wife. Three times in this passage Paul makes that statement. The question is how does a husband love his wife? What is God’s expectation for a husband in marriage. Well, we are given quite a few clues.

The first thing I think both wife and husband must realize is that marriage is a copy of something bigger, something special. Look back at verses 31-32.

³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

1. The prime example of **marriage** is Christ's marriage to the church.

Geoffrey Bromiley said, "As God made man in His own image, so He made earthly marriage in the image of His own eternal marriage with His people."

This elevates marriage to the highest of levels. God is saying that our physical marriage likens something that is spiritual, holy, pure and everlasting.

As we look for the husbands role in marriage, men can find their distinctive role as husband by keying off the way Christ relates to the church.

Look again at verse 23. **"²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior."**

So many times I think we have lost the true meaning of words, words like head, or being the head. When some men read this passage and they read the husband is the head of the wife they jump to the conclusion this means the husband gets to make all the decisions. He rules the house with an iron fist, he rules over the kids, the money, everything. But that is not what it means is it? Being the head of something is not a control thing but a service thing. The comparison of how a husband is a head is as Christ is the head of the church.

If we are looking at the comparison of Christ being the head of the church what does that look like? What does it mean to the head.

In the case of Christ being the head of church it means He is the source of all things.

2. Christ is the head, the source out of which every good thing flows

Think about the head like a head of a river, fountainhead, or headwaters.

I'll never forget something I saw in Kansas. Michal and I have a friend who is a farmer/rancher and on his land there is a beautiful small creek. I followed it through his pasture and came to a place where the water was flowing out between a couple of rocks. It was a spring, the fountainhead, the source of the creek.

All along the creek the grass was green and lush. There were trees growing by the creek, flowers and I am sure all kinds of wildlife came to the creek for the life giving water it provided. That is who Christ is to the church. The life giving source, the provider.

1 Corinthians 1:30, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

Christ is the source of all things. Salvation, wisdom, right standing before God and holiness.

3. Following the example of Christ, the husband is to be the head, the source out of which every good thing for his wife flows

²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

I think the key to unlocking this passage is in the second part of verse 31, the two will become one flesh.

As a man, the husband is the head, the source of all things. This means

4. The husband is responsible for the well-being of not only his body but the body that is part of him and that he is the part of

He is to feed, care for, nourish both physically and spiritually his new two-part body. He is provide protection from physical harm as well as spiritual harm.

Most men know to do this for themselves but have they taken on the role of being the head, the source of all things for their wives?

Look at verse 26-27, “²⁶ **to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,** ²⁷ **and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.**”

This is what Christ does for the church but also what husbands are to do for their wives. Wash them with the word. Christ said to His apostles, you have been made holy by the word I have spoken to you. The same things occurs to wives when the husband, as the head, as the source, reads scripture to his wife and over his wife.

Lastly, verse 25. “²⁵ **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...**”

Christ sacrificed His life for the church didn't He?

I read somewhere that a wife said that she knows her husband would take a bullet for her but she also said she knew he would complain about her driving all the way to the hospital.

Husbands are to give themselves up to their wives as Christ gave Himself up to the church. I think men, this means we are to sacrifice our wants, wishes and comfort to the well-being of our wives.

It is not always easy but it is rewarding.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, the cross was looming before Him. He knew the pain and suffering of not only dying on the cross but also the whippings, beatings, verbal abuse and rejection that was in front of it.

As Jesus was praying, three times in the Garden He asked if there was another way. But three times He said what... not My will but yours be done. Jesus endured the cross because He knew the joy that would be produced if He was obedient to the will of His Father.

5. When husbands die to themselves, love and serve their wives, there is God given joy and many other blessings that come to them

These things are not easy are they. Being in a marriage with another human being is not easy. Dying to self, loving, being submissive, all the things Jesus asks us to do are not always easy but if we are commanded to do them, if we are given the comparison that our marriage is to be like Christ and the church, and if Jesus Christ is the source of all good things, then we can depend on Him to give us the direction and the strength to be who we are called to be. All we need to do is to call out to Him.

This week, ladies I would say to you that this sermon is not to be mentioned by you to your husbands. That is the Holy Spirit's work. There is enough work to be done if each party, husband and wife, focuses on what God has called them to do without worrying about what the other is or is not doing.

Husbands, last week I said it is important for the wives to be obedient to call of the Lord in their life. They are to be submissive to your leadership as head as unto the Lord. The same is true for you. You are to love your wife as unto the Lord. As you love and are obedient to the Lord you are to love and serve your wife.

Amen? Let's pray