 Is ***your*** marriage what it is **SUPPOSED** to be?? Several years ago, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article entitled “*The Seven Ages of the Married Cold*.” It revealed the reaction of a husband to his wife’s colds during their first seven years of marriage. It went something like this:

*The first year*: “Sugar dumpling, I’m really worried about my baby girl. You’ve got a bad sniffle, and there’s no telling about these things with all this strep throat going around. I’m putting you in the hospital this afternoon for a general checkup and a good rest. I know the food’s lousy, but I’ll be bringing your meals in from Rosini’s. I’ve already got it all arranged with the floor superintendent.”

*The second year*: “Listen, darling, I don’t like the sound of that cough. I called Doc Miller and asked him to rush over here. Now you go to bed like a good girl, please? Just for Papa.”

*The third year:* “Maybe you’d better lie down, honey: nothing like a little rest when you feel lousy. I’ll bring you something to eat. Have you got any canned soup?”

*The fourth year:* “Now look, dear, be sensible. After you’ve fed the kids, washed the dishes and finished the floor, you’d better lie down.”

*The fifth year:* “Why don’t you take a couple of aspirin?”

*The sixth year:* “I wish you’d just gargle or something, instead of sitting around all evening barking like a seal!”

*The seventh year:* “For Pete’s sake, stop sneezing! Are you trying to give me pneumonia?”

The decline of marriage as seen through the common cold. A funny look at a not-so-funny reality. Are you still treating the woman you married the same way you did when you were dating or when you were first married? ([www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org))

***Are your treating her like you are SUPPOSED to? ? ?***

Paul gives us three pairs of relationships: wives and husbands, children and fathers, slaves and masters. Each set of instructions has a key word. The key word forming a foundation for the whole thing, as have seen, is in v21—"*Submit to one another in the fear of Christ*.” For wives, the key word was **submit**. For Husbands, the key word is **love**.

In our text we see :

* **SIX** TIMES Paul uses the word **love** her in 9 verses.
* **THREE** TIMES he talks about how men should love their wives - “***How To***” :
  + - * Just as Christ loved the church;
* As their own bodies;
* As they love themselves.
* **FINALLY** he says “*Love your wife as you love yourself.*”

We are going to let these 3 “How To’s” - or three times Paul says “***AS***” - provide the structure for this morning’s message: Just **as** Christ loved the church; **As** their own bodies and **As** they love themselves.

**I. JUST AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH (5.25-7)**

*Husbands, LOVE your wives, just as Christ loved the church*

There you have it. Men, go ***DO*** it.OKAY, that’s it; let’s go eat! (WINK)

“Loved” is ***egapesev***—seen in the entire life and ministry of Jesus. But seen especially clearly in His sacrificial death on the cross.

Love is compassionate concern that gives sacrificially. There are 4 elements and each is essential : compassion—concern—giving—sacrifice. If one element is missing, love is not this God-like agape that the Bible pictures.

What did the love of Jesus cause Him to do?

*He gave Himself for her -- for the CHURCH -- FOR HER—***NOT** for Himself.

I heard about a guy who knew his wife wanted an electric leaf blower for the patio and her gazebo. So being the guy he was, he got her a 20 piece Kobalt rechargeable tool system. She was NOT impressed. She knew that he got that set-up for HIMSELF, not for her. Bro. Jimmy, I don’t know if Frances wants a quad copter for her birthday, but I kind of doubt it.

Jesus did what He did for the church, for His church. He did it for us, Christians.

**WHY** did Christ GIVE Himself for the church?

* To make her holy (26)
* To present her to Himself (27)
  + In splendor
  + Without spot
  + Without wrinkle
  + Look at v27 “*or ANYTHING like that*” - covers it ALL [happy-hunting-ground for preachers!]
  + Holy
  + Blameless

**II. AS THEIR OWN BODIES (5.28-30)**

*the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies*

See that he says, “*in the same way*” (28). What does he mean? He means “in exactly the same way” — the same way Jesus loves, husbands are to love, EXACTLY the SAME!

As their own bodies.

A man married a beautiful girl. He loved her very much. One day she developed a skin disease and slowly her beauty starting fading.

It so happened that one day her husband left for a tour. While returning he met with an accident and lost his eyesight. However, their married life continued as usual.

As the days passed, the wife’s beauty continued to fade more so. The blind husband did not know this and reminded by her side. There was not much change in their married life. He continued to love her and she also loved him very much.

One day she died. Her death brought him great sorrow. He finished all her last rites and wanted to leave that town. A friend came by and said, “now how will you be able to walk all alone? All these days your wife used to help you.”

He replied, I am *not*blind. I was acting, because if my wife knew l could see her beauty deteriorating, it would have caused her more pain than her disease. I pretended to be blind. She was a very good wife. I wanted her to be happy.

***Sometimes it is good for us to act blind and ignore one another’s shortcomings, in order to be happy.*** ([www.medium.com](http://www.medium.com))

**III. AS THEY LOVE THEMSELVES (5.31-33)**

*For this reason . . . LEAVING and CLEAVING*

The two become one.

This is a PROFOUND mystery, “*but I am talking about Christ and the church*.”

God created people. God created the family. God created marriage. It was His idea, and it is a GOOD one. He knows how it works. We need to listen to what He has to ssay about all these things.

Once upon a time a noble knight married a beautiful princess, and they lived happily ever after. For a while. And then came a dragon who started stealing from the princes — a memory here, and idea there. A story. A smile. A thought. The dragon was quiet and sneaky. It took a while before people realized things were missing. There came a day when the noble knight realized he couldn’t save his princess, but he could stand by her to the end. So, he did.

This is no fairy tale. It’s the real-life story of [Robertson and his wife, Muriel](https://www.focusonthefamily.com/contributors/robertson-mcquilkin/). Robertson was the [president of Columbia International University](https://www.ciu.edu/newsstory/remembering-robertson-mcquilkin). He was at the peak of his career when his wife Muriel was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. As her condition worsened, Robertson realized he could either continue to lead the university or care for his wife. He chose sacrificial love for his wife. “It’s not that I have to,” he said, “It’s that I get to. I promised that in sickness and in health till death do us part,” he told school leaders, “And I’m a man of my word.”

For the next 13 years, Robertson put his career and accomplishment aside to focus on the greater work of caring for his wife. “[Husbands, love your wives](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205%3A25&version=ESV),” the Apostle Paul encouraged men in the church at Ephesus. “Love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25, ESV). (Arbuckle, www.focusonthefamily.com )

Husbands, ***love your wives***!