

**Ephesians 5-25-33**  
**The spirit filled husband**

**Miscellaneous comments-**

Sold out of books last week... more on order.

**Prayer-**

**Sermon introduction-**

In the 1990s, many people considered Trinity Evangelical Divinity School the best evangelical seminary in the world. It had a world class international faculty. It was well funded, and the student body was the creme of the crop from all over the world. Furthermore, it was located in the suburbs of Chicago, a world class city.

Wayne Grudem was a rising star on the faculty. His Systematic Theology textbook became the best-selling systematic theology of the last 30 years.

Life was great for Dr. Grudem, he was teaching at the best seminary in the world, he was stimulated by brilliant colleges, and he lived in a world class city.

But, Dr. Grudem's wife Margaret had chronic health issues. When he happened to spend some time in Phoenix, her chronic health problems nearly vanished. She asked if he would be willing to move their family to Phoenix for the sake of her health. At this point, he said to his wife, "Sweetheart, I'm only trained to do one thing, teach seminary. If you can find a seminary in Phoenix I will consider moving." A short time later Margaret found a little seminary in Phoenix that nobody had ever heard of.

To make a long story short, Dr. Grudem quit his prestigious job at a world class seminary and took a job at an academically insignificant seminary in Phoenix (this would be like going from Harvard to SCC, with all due respect for SCC). Why? Because Dr. Grudem was intimately familiar with Ephesians 5:25-33, which says "husbands love your wives and Christ love the church."

Husbands are we willing to set everything aside, including our careers, die to our own wants and desires, in order to love our wives? This is what Paul calls us to do. Last week we looked at the role of the wife, this week we will look at the role of the husband.

What is the role of the husband? Husbands are called to love their wives!!!

Three points...

The model of love (longest point)

The motive to love

The muscle to love

**First, the model of love**

*Christ is the model of love for all Christian husbands. What does this look like?*

**Christ model's sacrificial love!**

**Ephesians 5:25 (ESV) — 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,**

The command to love is a present imperative verb, meaning that a husband must continually love his wife. This means that a husband's love for his wife is not contingent on his wife's behavior, health, appearance, age, weight, wrinkles, or anything else. Husbands love their wives to make them worthy, not because they are worthy.

How exactly does a husband love his wife? He loves his wife as Christ loved the church, which means he loves his wife by dying! Christ loved his bride, the church by coming to earth, living a perfect life, and suffering and dying in her place on the cross so that all of her sins could be washed away.

The extent of Christ love is measured by his willingness to die—but Christ did not die just any death—he died on the cross. Many husbands would probably be willing to jump into the lake, jump in front of a train, or donate a kidney to save their wife. But how about being unjustly accused, stripped naked, whipped, beaten, mocked, and then crucified over a garbage dump? This is how Christ loves the church.

This was humble love  
It was painful love  
It was an emptying love  
It was love for enemies  
It was love for the unworthy.  
It was a cleansing and purifying love.  
Most importantly, Christ's love was sacrificial love

Christ sacrificed everything for his bride the church. This means that a husband must be willing to sacrifice everything—including his life—for the well-being of his wife. Even when she is unlovely.

Most husbands don't have the opportunity to literally die for their wives, but the husband needs to be willing to crucify his own wants and desires to ensure the happiness and spiritual well-being of his wife.

Husbands, are we willing to do this??? How did this go last week?

Do you remember, husbands, how you pursued your wife just before she said yes? Magnify that by 10,000 and you will begin to understand how to love your wife as Christ loved the church.

Christ model's sacrificial love

### **Illustration:**

I have told this story before, but I have not found a better one, so I will tell it again.

*In 1989 Robertson McQuilkin was at the peak of his career. He was the president of a large and prestigious evangelical seminary. In 1990 he shocked everyone by quitting his job to take care of his wife full time. She had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Three years later his wife no longer recognized him. For the next ten years he cared for her through thick and thin. She died in 2003 at the age of 81.*

*One reporter asked him what a typical day was like and he said- "I would fix breakfast and then go in and turn on the lights, and she would awaken, although in the last year or two she didn't open her eyes much. Usually in the morning she would open her eyes and then I would feed her. And then of course, after that I had to change and clean her up... Then lunch. She had to be changed every four hours. In the evening we would again have supper, and after supper about 9:00 I'd start working on the bedtime routine.*

*Once, though, I completely lost it. In the days when Muriel could still stand and walk and we had not resorted to diapers, sometimes there were "accidents." I was on my knees beside her, trying to clean up the mess as she stood, confused, by the toilet. It would have been easier if she weren't so insistent on helping.... I mopped frantically, trying to fend off the interfering hands, and contemplated how best to get a soiled slip over a head that was totally opposed to the idea.*

Robertson McQuilkin was following Christ's example. He loved his wife with sacrificial love.

### **Application-**

One scholar writes,

“The path to Christian leadership in the home is always the way of the cross.” (Chappell, 289)

Husbands we love our wives sacrificially by leading in the discipline and instruction of the children (scene in the Incredibles... husbands don't assume that your wife is going to watch the kids in group settings...)

Husbands we love our wives sacrificially by blessing them financially, when possible.

Husbands we love our wives sacrificially by listening to them very attentively.

Husbands we love our wives sacrificially by admitting when we are wrong.

Husbands we love our wives sacrificially by planning dates and romantic getaways (if she is into these types of things).

This type of love is constantly taking the initiative. Christ took the initiative in “giving himself up...” for us. We were not looking to be saved, yet he took the initiative.

There are some guys who sin against their wives by ruling over them with an iron fist. This must be repented of. But most guys do the opposite. We are passive, just like Adam in the garden. We don't take the initiative. We may be aggressive at work, but we are passive with our wives. This is tragic, since it is saying the Christ was passive with his bride. Nothing is further from the truth.

Godly husbands initiate romance, prayer, communication, and affection.

Let me nuance for a moment. Sacrificial love does not mean that the husband follows his wife around constantly saying “yes dear, yes dear, yes dear.” The husband must constantly be asking this question, what will cause my wife to flourish the most, long term! The wife may not always agree with the husband's plans to help her flourish. Yet the husband is the head of his wife. Ultimately, he needs to do what he believes is best for his family.

Wives are called to submit to their husbands, but husbands are called to die for their wives!!!

*Christ model's sacrificial love.*

**Christ model's sanctifying love!**

**Ephesians 5:26–27 (ESV) — 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.**

More than likely Paul had a Jewish wedding in mind when he penned these words.

In the Hebrew culture of the ANE the bride prepared all day to meet her groom at the wedding celebration. All of her close female friends and family worked all day to prepare the bride to meet her groom. This included preparing her to take a ritual wedding bath to cleanse herself for the groom.

When her bath was over her friends adorned her in an embroidered linen wedding dress and sandals, after making sure that her dress was without spot or wrinkle (see also Ezekiel 16:8-13).

According to Ephesians, Jesus Christ prepares his own bride, the church, for the great wedding celebration. How?

In 5:26, Paul writes, “That he (Christ) might sanctify her (the church), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”

Christ cleanses his bride by washing her with the water of the word. Notice that the “word” is the cleansing agent or the detergent.

**Illustration:** last summer I used some nasty oil-based paint. I could not get it off with normal soap. I had to get it off with “goop” the goop was the cleansing agent.

God’s word is the cleansing agent. God specifically cleanses us (the church) with his word by the power of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Scriptures, meditation on Scripture, and daily Bible reading (John 3:5; Titus 3:5; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 3:21).

Jesus Christ is cleansing his bride, the church, with the Word of God so that she will be pure and spotless when he returns for the great marriage supper of the lamb.

**Application:**

Christ loves the church his bride by cleansing her with the Word.

Husbands love their wives by cleansing them with the Word.

Husbands, you are meant to be one of the most prominent instruments of sanctification in your spouse’s life. How do you sanctify your wife? With the Word!

This does not necessarily mean that you need to read the Bible to her every day—this is not always practical! Context of the 1<sup>st</sup> century (most people did not have copies of God’s Word).

Rather, I think it means that the husband needs to do all that he can to make sure that his wife is exposed to as much Bible as possible.

A husband must make sure that his wife is going to a good Bible preaching church.

A husband needs to initiate prayer (what we do).

Husbands, you must initiate spiritual conversation.

You may want to recommend books....

Talk about spiritual things...

Husbands must shepherd their wife’s through anxiety, doubts, cares, and concerns.

Husbands, one of your greatest goals and highest aspirations must be cleansing your wife with the Word.

“But Dave, my wife is way more spiritual than me!” You need to get more spiritual and you need to initiate spiritual conversation with your wife.

*Christ models sacrificial love*

*Christ models sanctifying love*

**Christ models cherishing love!**

**Ephesians 5:28–31 (ESV) — 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.”

According to verse 29-30 Christ loves his bride, the church, by nourishing and cherishing her. Why? According to verse 30, the church is a member of Christ’s body.

What does this mean? When we became Christians, we were united to Christ by faith, therefore we (the church) are literally members of Christ’s body. Amazing!!!

As a result of our union with Christ, Christ takes great care to nourish and cherish us, since we are members of his own body.

In a similar sense, Paul argues that husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies, because their wives are literally part of their bodies. How? When they got married, the two became one flesh (v.31).

### **Illustration:**

Couple in Fairfax (personal trainer husband and out of shape wife).

Husband was a personal trainer. He was very committed to fitness. He read all the books, he counted every calorie, ate lots of Broccoli and Kale, and avoided sugar and carbs, he woke up early every morning to work out. He possessed Spartan like discipline. As a result, he was jacked!!!

His wife was the exact opposite. She was very unmotivated to work out. She ate whatever she wanted whenever she wanted. She would rather read a romance novel or watch a movie then lift a barbell. As a result, she was out of shape and overweight.

As you can imagine, this created fierce conflict in their relationship. But I wonder what would have happened if the husband would have spent as much time nourishing and cherishing his wife as he spent nourishing and cherishing his own body? I think it would have solved their “marital problems.”

### **Application:**

Husbands think of how well you nourish and cherish your own body. I’m sure you are intimately aware of your bodies social, emotional, physical, sexual, financial, and spiritual needs.

Are you nourishing and cherishing your wife’s body in the same way? In other words, do you understand your wife’s social, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs?

If not, you need to sit down with her and draw her out!!

Do you know what brings her joy? Do you know what clothing and Jewelry she likes? Is she into poetry? Who are her favorite authors? What is her Starbucks drink? Does she like to go to the craft store? Etc...

In other words, are you cherishing her by loving her as much as you love yourself?

Husbands when you love your wife this way, you love yourself (5:28b).

*Christ models sacrificial love*

*Christ models sanctifying love*

*Christ models cherishing love*

Husbands, Christ is our model. Maybe you are wondering, why husbands should follow this model? This brings us to the second point.

*First, the model of love!*

### **Second, the motive to love!**

**What should motivate husbands to love their wives? The gospel!**

**Ephesians 5:31–33 (ESV) — 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.

In verse 32 Paul says, “This mystery is profound, and I’m saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” What is the mystery that Paul is referring to? A biblical mystery is something that was hidden in the past, that has recently been made known or revealed.

In the OT it was not real clear that human marriage pointed to something beyond itself. But with the birth of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the creation of the church at Pentecost, it is now clear that human marriage was always meant to point humanity to something for greater than itself, human marriage is meant to point humanity to Christ’s sacred marriage to the church. This means that human marriage is not ultimate. Furthermore, this means that human marriage is modeled after Christ and the church and not the other way around.

One scholar writes,

“God does not exist to make much of marriage; marriage exists to show the world the glory of Christ and his church.” (GTSB)

Husbands, the gospel is your chief motive for loving your wife. When you love your wife like Christ loved the church you are showing the watching world a picture of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What a privilege!!!!

When you fail, and you will fail, you must never forget that you too are a member of the church. Therefore, Christ died for you in order to forgive and cleanse you.

But don’t be content with your marriage. Keep looking at Christ and the church again, and again, and again for fresh motivation and perspective to keep loving your wife.

The most important relationship in your life, your marriage, is meant to constantly drive you back to the gospel...

You may be thinking...

I see the model for love...

I see the motive for love...

But loving a wife this way is really hard. Where will I find strength? This brings us to the last point.

*The model of love*

*The motive to love*

### **Third, the muscle to love!**

**Ephesians 5:18–21 (ESV) — 18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul continues his train of thought through verse 25...

**Ephesians 5:25 (ESV) — 25** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

Christian marriage is not hard, it is impossible. No man can find the resources within himself to love his wife as Christ loved the church. But, there is hope, God has given us the holy Spirit. The same Spirit that strengthened the man Christ Jesus to love his bride the church is available to all Christians. The holy Spirit will fill you—husband—and strengthen you to love like Christ loved the church. But you need to ask for help!!! You need to breathe out sin (repentance) and breath in the Holy Spirit (asking for his strength). God has given you the muscle required to love in a way that displays Christ’s love for the church.

Let me conclude with hope.

Maybe you are thinking, “I have been married for 5 years, 25 years, or 55 years and I have made a real mess of things. I have heard talks like this before, and I’m still a lousy husband. Honestly, I’m not sure that my marriage can turn the corner.” I can say with confidence, based on the words of Ephesians 5, that any marriage can be turned around. Any husband can love like Christ loved the church. How can I be so confident? because God’s glory is at stake. He loves his glory so much that he has given you everything you need to love your wife like Christ loves the church. Humble yourself and go to God for help. He will help you. let’s pray...

Communion connection:

Marriage supper of the lamb... in this life, no marriage is perfect, every marriage has its share of disappointments and struggles.... But human marriage was never meant to be ultimate. The ultimate marriage is the marriage between Christ and his church, which you