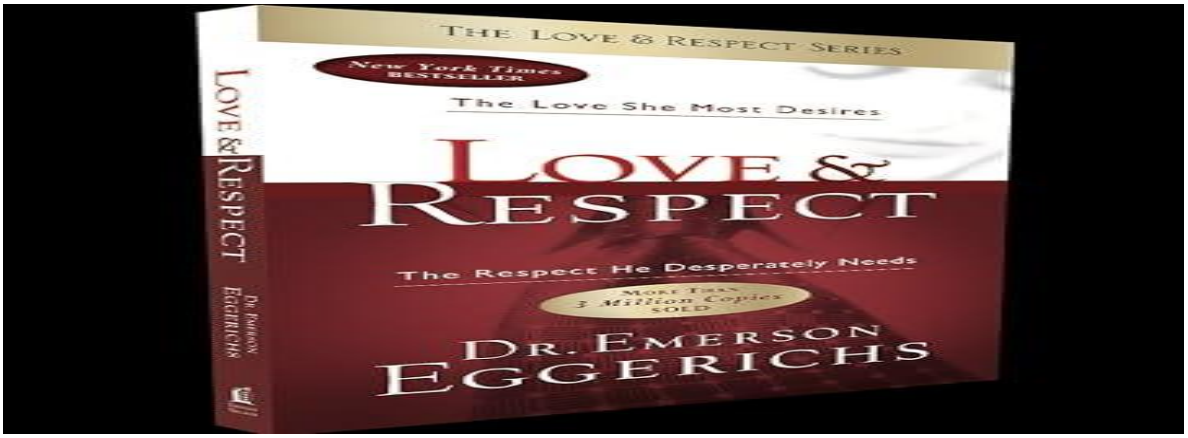
Family Matters: The Greatest Marriage Ephesians 5:33 FBC Canton Sunday am October 25, 2026

Introduction: Marriage was very good in the beginning, so what happened? Genesis 3

Jesus loves his bride. His example is our example in marriage.



I. **Nevertheless, means 'how be it.' How to be in a Godly marriage! V. 33**
   a. **Both Spirit-filled. Ephesians 5:18-20**
      a. Both born again.
      b. Both submitted to sanctification.
         i. Marriage is the greatest sanctifier of our souls.
         ii. It will test your self-less ness.
      c. Both operating in the fruit of the Spirit.
   b. **Husbands: 'tend and keep' means love. Genesis 1**
      a. **How do you spell love? I Corinthians 13**
         i. **Closeness.**
            1. it means she wants to be emotionally close to him, to feel connected and near in her relationship with him.
         ii. **Openness.**
            1. it means giving her the freedom to share her thoughts, feelings, and experiences without judgment, control, or interrogation.
         iii. **Understanding.**
            1. it refers to actively perceiving, acknowledging, and valuing your spouse's feelings, needs, and perspective.
         iv. **Peacemaking.**
            1. she wants you to say, "I'm sorry."
         v. **Loyalty.**
            1. she needs to know you're committed

vi. **Esteem.**

In Eggerichs' terms, esteeming your wife is about:

- Valuing her worth and character — seeing her as someone of inherent value, not just for what she does for you.
- Affirming her identity — recognizing her strengths, contributions, and personality, and letting her know you see and appreciate them.
- Showing appreciation — through words, actions, and attitudes that convey that she is important and cherished.
- Avoiding demeaning or belittling behavior — even in frustration, maintaining a tone and language that honors her.

c. Wives: 'help' means respect.

a. How do you spell respect?

i. Conquest.

1. appreciate his desire to work and achieve Hierarchy

ii. Hierarchy.

1. appreciate his desire to protect and provide

iii. Analyze.

1. appreciate his desire to serve and lead Insight

iv. Insight.

1. appreciate his desire to analyze and counsel

v. Relationship.

1. appreciate his desire for shoulder-to-shoulder friendship

vi. Sexual intimacy.

1. appreciate his desire for sexual intimacy

II. The end of marriage: God hates what divorce does to his children. Malachi 2:16

a. Hardness of heart, means you don't trust intentions. Matthew 19:8

i. Adultery. Matthew 19:8

ii. Abandonment. I Corinthians 7:11-13

iii. Abuse.

b. Remarriage; when the heart is no longer hard.

i. No perpetual sin, just permanent consequences.

ii. Grace is bigger than divorce.

iii. Use failures for transformation.

Conclusion: Marriage fails with no love or respect.

David Guzik
Study Guide for Ephesians 5

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

A. Forsaking the darkness.

1. (Ephesians 5:1-2) Walking in love.

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

a. **Therefore**: Here, Paul concludes the thought from Ephesians 4, where he described how Christians should relate to one another.

b. **Be imitators of God**: The idea is simple — that we are to make *God* our example and model. We can't content ourselves comparing us among men. We must heed the idea of 1 Peter 1:15-16: *as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

i. It does not say, "Think about God" or "Admire God" or "Adore God," though those are all important Christian duties. This is a call to practical action, going beyond our inner life with God.

ii. We could say this is a continuation of the same idea Paul mentioned in Ephesians 4:13 regarding the extent of Christian growth: *to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*. We could also say that this is a continuation of the idea from Ephesians 4:32, where we were commanded to be *forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*. God's behavior towards us becomes our measure for our behavior towards one another.

iii. It is important to see that God *is far more than our example*. Many errors come into the church when Jesus is presented *only* as an example of behavior. We are not *saved* by the example of Jesus, but *once saved* His example is meaningful to us. God is *more* than our example, but He is *also* our example.

c. **As dear children**: Children are natural imitators. They often do just what they see their parents or other adults do. When we act according to our nature as children of God, we will imitate Him.

i. As we do imitate God, we become representatives of God, especially before those who have shut God out of their life. "What are we sent into the world for? Is it not that we may keep men in mind of God, whom they are most anxious to forget? If we are imitators of God,

as dear children, they will be compelled to recollect that there is a God, for they will see his character reflected in ours. I have heard of an atheist who said he could get over every argument except the example of his godly mother: he could never answer that." (Spurgeon)

d. **Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us**: As in all things, Jesus is our example. As He **has loved us and** has **given Himself for us**, we are to display the same kind of self-giving love.

e. **An offering and a sacrifice**: Jesus' giving of Himself was obviously a sacrifice pleasing to the Father. We can also offer a pleasing sacrifice (**a sweet-smelling aroma**) as we give ourselves in love to others.

i. We often think we could lay down our life in a dramatic way to show our love for others. But God often calls us to lay down our life little by little — in small coins (as it were) instead of one large payment — but it is laying down our lives nonetheless.

ii. Adam Clarke on **an offering**: "An oblation, an eucharistic offering; the same as *minchah*, Leviticus 2:1 and following, which is explained to be *an offering made unto the Lord, of fine flour, with oil and frankincense*. It means, any offering by which *gratitude* was expressed for temporal blessings received from the *bounty* of God."

iii. Adam Clarke on **a sacrifice**: "A *sin-offering*, a *victim for sin*; the same as *zebach*, which almost universally means that sacrificial act in which the blood of an *animal* was poured out as an atonement for sin. These terms may be justly considered as including every kind of *sacrifice*, *offering*, and *oblation* made to God on any account."

2. (Ephesians 5:3-4) A contrast to walking in love: conduct not fitting for the Christian.

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

a. **Let it not even be named among you**: Paul groups together these ideas of sexual sin and impropriety, indicating that none of these are **fitting for saints** and should not even **be named among** God's people.

i. Paul used a comprehensive list of sexual sins:

- **Fornication** (*porneia*), a broad word describing sexual sin.
- **Uncleanness**, another broad word for "dirty" moral behavior, especially in a sexual sense.
- **Filthiness**, which has much the same idea as **uncleanness**.
- **Coarse jesting**, which has the idea of inappropriate, impure sexual humor.

ii. We must notice the theme of the moral appeal. It isn't "avoid these things so that you can be a saint." Rather, it is "you are a saint; now live in a manner fitting for a saint." The constant moral appeal of the New Testament is simply this: *be who you are in Jesus*.

b. **As is fitting for saints**: This emphasis on sexual sin was appropriate. The culture of Paul's day (and in the city of Ephesus especially) was given over to sexual immorality. The sort of behavior Paul says is not **fitting for saints** was pretty much completely approved by the culture of his day (and our own).

c. **Covetousness… foolish talking**: Paul also included **covetousness** and **foolish talking** in this list because of their close association with sexual sin. The desire to have something that doesn't belong to us and foolish speaking have both led many people into sexual sin. Yet **covetousness** and **foolish talking** also have relevance *beyond* their relation to sexual sin.

i. **Foolish talking** is literally "an easy turn of speech." In the context, the idea is of the one who can turn every conversation into a joking comment on sexual matters, usually with a double-entendre.

d. **But rather giving of thanks**: Positively, the Christian is to give **thanks** for sex. We receive it thankfully as a gift, and we enjoy sex in a way that glorifies the Giver.

i. God's purpose in giving sex is not primarily for the gratification of the individual, but for the bonding together of husband and wife in a one-flesh relationship. Certain expressions of sexuality are sin *not because* God wants to deprive some aspect of enjoyment, but because they work against His primary purpose for sex.

3. (Ephesians 5:5-7) The consequences of conduct not fitting for Christians.

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

a. **Has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God**: The people mentioned in Ephesians 5:3 (the **fornicator**, the **unclean person** and the **covetous man**) have no inheritance in God's kingdom. If God's kingdom is alive in them, a transformation has occurred so that they cannot rest in the habitual practice of these things.

i. Paul's idea in this passage can be applied out of context in a condemning way. One might say, "Well, I've thought about committing fornication, so that means that I have fornicated in my heart and that means that I am as guilty as someone who has actually committed the act of fornication. Since I am as guilty as that one, and they have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, neither do I, because of my thoughts about fornication." This deceptive thinking goes against the plain sense of God's word.

b. **Covetous man, who is an idolater**: Significantly, Paul says that the **covetous man** is an **idolater**. Idolatry happens in much more subtle (and powerful) ways than simply bowing down before a statue.

c. **Let no one deceive you with empty words**: We cannot allow **empty words** to excuse or minimize the judgment due to the practice of these sins. It is certain that **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience**.

d. **Therefore do not be partakers with them**: Paul assumes that Christians will not have their lives *habitually* marked by fornication, uncleanness or covetousness. Yet we should not even *occasionally* be **partakers with them** who are.

4. (Ephesians 5:8-12) The passing from darkness to light.

For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

a. **For you were once darkness**: As Paul condemned those who practiced fornication, uncleanness or covetousness as *the sons of disobedience* (Ephesians 5:6), he also recognized that this was the exact **darkness** Christians had emerged from. But now, having been enlightened, we are to **walk as children of the light**.

i. Again, the theme is repeated: you *are* **children of light**, so *live* like **children of light**.

ii. Paul doesn't only say that we were once *in* darkness. He says we **were once darkness** itself. Now, we are not only in the light, we **are light in the Lord**.

b. **For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth**: In contrast to the walk in darkness and wrath is the **fruit of the Spirit**, more fully described in Galatians 5:22-23. **Goodness, righteousness, and truth** should mark us because we have the Holy Spirit in our life.

c. **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them**: Instead of associating with ungodliness, we expose the **unfruitful works of darkness**. However, we do not do this for the purpose of merely talking about them (which is **shameful**), but for the purpose of educating ourselves enough to avoid them.

i. Christians must guard against a prurient interest in **the works of darkness**, even in times of testimony or research.

ii. Paul was careful to say that we should avoid the **unfruitful *works* of darkness**, not the people who are in darkness.

B. Walking in the light.

1. (Ephesians 5:13-14) The fact of the light's presence.

But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

a. **But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light**: Even the things done **in secret** will be exposed. They will be made **manifest** by the light of God's searching judgment.

i. This is a *reason* for avoiding and exposing the unfruitful works of darkness as described in Ephesians 5:8-12. Since those unfruitful works are destined for exposure and their day will be over, it makes sense for Christians to avoid such unfruitful works.

b. **Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead**: Our participation in the light is shown by our resurrection with Jesus (He *made us alive together with Christ*, Ephesians 2:5). Paul quoted what was probably a worship chorus from the early church to illustrate this truth.

i. Remember that this exhortation to **awake** comes to *Christians*. A Christian may be asleep and not know it. If you are asleep, you probably do not know it. As soon as you become aware of your sleep, it is evidence that you are now awake.

ii. "This sleepiness in the Christian is exceedingly dangerous, too, because he can do a great deal while he is asleep that will make him look as if he were quite awake." (Spurgeon)

- We can speak when we are asleep.
- We can hear when we are asleep.
- We can walk when we are asleep.
- We can sing when we are asleep.
- We can think when we are asleep.

iii. "The man who is asleep does not care what becomes of his neighbors; how can he while he is asleep? And oh! Some of you Christians do not care whether souls are saved or damned… It is enough for them if they are comfortable. If they can attend a respectable place of worship and go with others to heaven, they are indifferent about everything else." (Spurgeon)

2. (Ephesians 5:15-17) Walking in the light means walking in wisdom.

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

a. **See then that you walk circumspectly**: Because this light was given to us, we should walk **circumspectly** — carefully, wisely, **not as fools**.

i. Adam Clarke thought that the phrase **not as fools** was connected to the practices of devotion to the ancient god Bacchus, worship with drinking and partying. "*Do not become madmen*. Here is a most evident allusion to the *orgies of Bacchus*, in which his votaries acted like madmen; running about, tossing their heads from shoulder to shoulder, appearing to be in every sense completely frantic."

b. **Redeeming the time**: There were two ancient Greek words used for **time**. One had the idea simply of day upon day and hour upon hour. The other had the idea of a definite portion of time, a time where something should happen. It is the difference between *time* and **the time**. The idea here is of **the time**; it is a definite season of opportunity that Christians must redeem. This same word is translated *opportunity* in Galatians 6:10.

i. Paul isn't telling us to make the most of every moment, even though that is good advice. He tells us to seize opportunity for the glory of Jesus. It isn't to make the most of time, but to make the most of **the time**.

ii. The idea behind **redeeming the time** is that you buy up opportunities like a shrewd businessman. You make the most of every opportunity for Jesus Christ.

c. **Because the days are evil**: This is another reason why it is important to walk wisely. Jesus spoke of a time when, *many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold* (Matthew 24:11-12). Surely we are in those times, **because the days are evil**.

d. **Understand what the will of the Lord is**: This is what real wisdom is. It is the contrast to being **unwise**. Our main understanding of **the will of the Lord** comes from a good knowledge of His word.

3. (Ephesians 5:18) Walking in the light means constant filling with the Holy Spirit.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

a. **And do not be drunk with wine**: In contrast with the conduct of the world (being **drunk with wine**), we are to be **filled with the Spirit**. Paul's grammar here clearly says, "be *constantly being filled* with the Holy Spirit."

b. **Be filled with the Spirit**: The filling of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time event that we live off of the rest of our days. It is a constant filling, asking to be filled, and receiving the filling by faith.

i. There is a wonderful and significant *first* experience with the filling of the Holy Spirit, often thought of as the *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* (Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5 and 11:16). This is an experience valid and important for every believer.

ii. Much of the weakness, defeat and lethargy in our spiritual life can be attributed to the fact that we are not constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit.

iii. The ancient Greek grammar for **be filled** also indicates two other important things. First, the verb is *passive*, so this is not a manufactured experience. Second, it is *imperative*, so this is not an optional experience.

c. **Do not be drunk with wine**: The carnal contrast to being filled with the Holy Spirit is being **drunk**. The Bible condemns drunkenness without reservation.

i. **In which is dissipation**: Paul says that drunkenness is **dissipation**. This means that drunkenness is a *waste* of resources that should be submitted to Jesus. John Trapp writes of drinking "all the three outs" — "That is, ale out of the pot, money out of the purse, and wit out of the head." (Trapp's commentary on Galatians 5:21)

ii. We should listen to what Proverbs tells us about drunkenness in passages such as Proverbs 20:1 and 23:29-33.

iii. We must not think that *only* the state of "falling down drunk" qualifies as sin. Being impaired in any way by drink is sin, as well as drinking with the *intention* of becoming impaired.

iv. "The danger of drunkenness lies not only in itself but in what it may induce" (Wood). Practically, the world pays a high price for the ruin of alcoholism and drug addiction. To speak of alcohol alone, according to the United States Center for Disease Control, in 2010 88,000 people died of alcohol related causes in the USA, and excessive drinking cost the USA economy $249 billion dollars — almost a quarter of a trillion dollars. It is fair to suppose that the figures are comparable if not worse in many other nations.

d. **But be filled with the Spirit**: Paul *contrasts* the effect of the Holy Spirit with the state of drunkenness. Alcohol is a depressant; it "loosens" people because it depresses their self-control, their wisdom, their balance and judgment. The Holy Spirit has an exactly opposite effect. He is a stimulant; He moves every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance.

i. "We find it here imbedded amongst precepts laying down the great laws of self-control, and it comes just before the special directions which the Apostle gives for the quiet sanctities of the Christian home… But then, all the while, it is a thing supernatural. It is a state of man wholly unattainable by training, by reasoning, by human wish and will. It is nothing less than — God in command and control of man's whole life, flowing everywhere into it, that He may flow fully and freely out of it in effects around." (Moule)

4. (Ephesians 5:19-20) The Spirit-filled life is marked by worship and gratitude.

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

a. **Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**: When we are *filled with the Spirit*, we will have a desire to worship God and to encourage others in their worship of God.

i. The connection with being filled with the Spirit and praise is significant. Those who are filled with the Spirit will naturally praise, and praise is a way that we are filled with the Spirit.

b. **Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**: This variety suggests that God delights in creative, spontaneous worship. The most important place for us to have a **melody** unto God is in our **heart**. Many who can't sing a beautiful melody with the voice can have beautiful melodies in their heart.

i. The emphasis is more on *variety* than on *strict categories*. "We can scarcely say what is the exact difference between these three expressions." (Clarke)

c. **Giving thanks always for all things to God**: The one who is filled with the Spirit will also be filled with thanksgiving. A complaining heart and the Holy Spirit just don't go together.

i. Paul recommends the same pattern for our thanksgiving as he practiced in prayer in Ephesians 3:14 — giving thanks **to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

ii. "Every hour, yea, every moment has brought a favor upon its wings. Look downward and give thanks, for you are saved from hell; look on the right hand and give thanks, for you are enriched with gracious gifts; look on the left hand and give thanks, for you are shielded from deadly ills; look above you and give thanks, for heaven awaits you." (Spurgeon)

5. (Ephesians 5:21) The Spirit-filled life is marked by mutual submission.

Submitting to one another in the fear of God.

a. **Submitting to one another in the fear of God**: When we are *filled with the Spirit*, it will show by our mutual submission to each other; and the submission will be done **in the fear of God**, not the fear of man.

b. **Submitting**: The word **submitting** here literally means, "to be under in rank." It is a military word. It speaks of the way that an army is organized among levels of rank. You have generals and colonels and majors and captains and sergeants and privates. There are levels of rank, and you are obligated to respect those in higher rank.

i. We know that as a person, a private can be smarter, more talented, and a better person than a general. But he is still *under rank* to the general. He isn't submitted to the general so much as a *person* as he is to the general as a *general*.

ii. The idea of submission doesn't have anything to do with someone being smarter or better or more talented. It has to do with a God-appointed order. "Anyone who has served in the

armed forces knows that 'rank' has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability." (Wiersbe)

iii. We also see from this *how important* it is to be "under rank." In the military, they have a name for it when you no longer want to be "under rank." They call it "mutiny." "Just as an army would be in confusion if there were no levels of authority, so society would be in chaos without submission." (Wiersbe)

c. **Submitting to one another**: To understand what this means, we can first examine *what it does not mean*. It does not mean that there is no idea of "rank" in the body of Christ. We can see how someone might take that impression. "It says we should be **submitting to one another**. So I should be submitting to you and you should be submitting to me. No one has any more obligation to submit than anyone else."

i. We know this is what Paul *does not mean* because that would be a clear contradiction of other things that he wrote. For example, in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, Paul clearly tells the Corinthian Christians to submit to his authority and to do something. Can you imagine the Corinthian Christians answering back, "Well Paul, you wrote that we should be **submitting to one another**. So we think you should submit to us here."

ii. Or, another example is Hebrews 13:17, which says *Obey those who rule over you and be submissive*. If Paul meant that there was no "rank" or "order of authority" among believers, then this command in Hebrews 13:17 is meaningless.

iii. The idea of this military word is more easily applied when one rank is above another. Yet here Paul didn't use it in that way. It is easily applied when you tell a bunch of privates, "Submit to the generals." It is a little more difficult to get a hold of the meaning when you say to a group of privates "Submit to one another." Paul isn't emphasizing the idea of *rank*, because he addresses all Christians. But there is something else important here.

iv. Paul means that we should take this "under rank" attitude of the military and apply it to our everyday dealing with each other. When a man joins the military, the first thing he does is strip away his individuality. He is now the member of a company or a battalion. He is no longer an individual. When you join the army, you essentially sign away your right to decide what you want to do with your life and your time. An army is filled with individuals, but they can never be individualistic. That is the first thing that a man is broken of when he joins the army.

v. "Let no man be so tenacious of his own will or his opinion in matters indifferent, as to disturb the peace of the Church; in all such matters *give way* to each other, and let *love* rule." (Clarke)

vi. In practical action **submitting to one another** implies the following, all in line with the idea of being a "team player":

- The Christian must not be thoughtless, but think of others.
- The Christian must not be individualistic, must not be self-assertive. “Self-assertion is the very antithesis of what the Apostle is saying.” (Lloyd-Jones)
- The Christian must never be self-seeking.
- We must have a “team attitude.”
- We must be happy when someone else succeeds or does well.
- We must bear our own discomforts and trials with courage.

d. **In the fear of God**: This is an important point, because Paul repeats the idea all through the extended section speaking about submission:

- *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*
- *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*
- *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ*.

i. The words **in the fear of God** describe what should be our *motive* for **submitting to one another**. We should submit to one other — see ourselves no longer in an individualistic way, but as a unit, as a company or a battalion — out of respect for God the Father, respect for Jesus Christ.

ii. The motive for submission is *not* social kindness. The motive for submission is *not* the law of God. The motive for submission is *respect for Jesus Christ*. If we respect Jesus, we then should submit to one another because we love Jesus. Paul uses the term **fear** in this passage, but it is a **fear** — a respect — that is *compatible* with love. It is a fear of disappointing Jesus, a fear of grieving Him. That is totally compatible with love. When you really respect someone, you care about pleasing him or her, and you are afraid to disappoint that one.

C. The Spirit-filled life, submission, and responsibility in marriage.

“The danger is that we should think of marriage amongst Christians as essentially the same as it is with everybody else, the only difference being that these two people happen to be Christians whereas the others are not. Now if that is still our conception of marriage then we have considered this great paragraph entirely in vain. Christian marriage, the Christian view of marriage, is something that is essentially different from all views.” (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

1. (Ephesians 5:22) Walking in the light means wives submit to their husbands.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

a. **Wives**: Paul addressed **wives** and their responsibility in the Christian marriage first. This isn't because they are the bigger problem or because they need special attention. The reason is that the apostle was particularly concerned about this question of submission. That was the principle that he introduced in Ephesians 5:21. This aspect of submission has a particular application to wives in a Christian marriage.

i. The same logic continues on into Ephesians 6. Children are addressed before parents because Paul was primarily concerned about submission. Slaves are addressed before their masters because the apostle was primarily concerned about submission.

ii. There is no question that the apostle is continuing the thought from Ephesians 5:21, *submitting to one another in the fear of God*. In many of the best ancient Greek manuscripts, Ephesians 5:22 doesn't even have the word *submit*. It simply reads *wives, to your own husbands*. The topic is submission and Paul focused on a particularly important realm of submission — the Christian marriage, from the wife unto the husband.

iii. It is as if Paul said this: "I commanded you to submit to one another in a very general way. Now, if you do it in a general way, how much more so should **wives** do it to their own husbands in this special relationship of marriage."

b. **Wives, submit**: To **submit** means that you recognize someone has legitimate authority over you. It means you recognize that there is an order of authority, and that you are part of a unit, a team. You as an individual are not more important that the working of the unit or the team.

i. When we **submit** to God, we recognize God's authority and act accordingly. When we **submit** to the police, we recognize the authority of the police and act accordingly. When we **submit** to our employer, we recognize the authority of our employer and act accordingly.

ii. *Submission does not mean inferiority.* As well, *submission does not mean silence.* Submission means "sub-mission." There is a mission for the Christian marriage, and that mission is obeying and glorifying God. The wife says, "I'm going to put myself under that *mission*. That *mission* is more important than my individual desires. I'm not putting myself below my husband, I'm putting myself below the *mission* God has for our marriage, for my life."

c. **To your own husbands**: This defines the *sphere* of a wife's submission. The Bible never commands a *general* submission of women unto men in society. This order is commanded only in the spheres of the home and in the church. God has not commanded in His word that men have exclusive authority in the areas of politics, business, education, and so on.

d. **As to the Lord**: This is a crucial phrase. It colors everything else we understand about this passage. There have been two main wrong interpretations of this phrase, each favoring a certain position.

i. The wrong interpretation, which favors the husband, says that **as to the Lord** means that a wife should submit to her husband as if he were God himself. The idea is "you submit to God in absolutely everything without question, so you must submit to your husband in the same absolute way." This interpretation believes that the words "**as to the Lord**" define the *extent* of submission.

ii. This is wrong. It is true that the wife owes the husband a great deal of respect. Peter sets this across when he praises Sarah, the wife of Abraham, as an example of a godly wife, when she called Abraham "Lord." That doesn't mean "Lord" in the sense of God, but "Lord" in the sense of "master." That is a lot of respect. Yet still, it doesn't go as far as to say, "You submit completely to God, so you must submit to your husband the same way." Simply put, *in no place* does the Scripture say that a person should submit to another in that way. There are limits to the submission your employer can expect of you. There are limits to the submission the government can expect of you. There are limits to the submission parents can expect of children. In no place does the Scripture teach an unqualified, without exception, submission — except to God and God alone. To violate this is to commit the sin of idolatry.

iii. The wrong interpretation that favors the wife says that **as to the Lord** means "I'll submit to him as long as he does what the Lord wants." Then the wife often thinks it is her job to decide what the Lord wants. This interpretation thinks that **as to the Lord** defines the *limit* of submission.

iv. This is wrong. It is true that there are limits to a wife's submission; but when the wife approaches **as to the Lord** in this way, it degenerates into a case of "I'll submit to my husband when I agree with him. I'll submit to him when he makes the right decisions and carries them out the right way. When he makes a wrong decision, he isn't in **the Lord**, so I shouldn't submit to him then." *That is not submission at all*. Except for those who are plainly cantankerous and argumentative, *everyone* submits to others when they are in agreement. It is only when there is a *disagreement* that submission is tested.

e. **As to the Lord** does not define the *extent* of a wife's submission or the *limit* of a wife's submission. It defines the *motive* of a wife's submission.

i. "It means: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it is a part of your duty to the Lord, because it is an expression of your submission to the Lord.' Or, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands; do it in this way, do it as a part of your submission to the Lord.' In other words, you are not doing it only for the husband, you are doing it primarily for the Lord Himself… You are doing it for Christ's sake, you are doing it because you know that He exhorts you to do it, because it is well-pleasing in His sight that you should be doing it. It is part of your Christian behaviour, it is a part of your discipleship." (Lloyd-Jones)

ii. “For the Lord’s sake who commanded it, so that ye cannot be subject to him without being subject to them.” (Clarke)

iii. **As to the Lord** means…

- A wife’s submission to her husband is part of her Christian life and obedience.
- When a wife doesn’t obey this word to **submit to your own husband, as to the Lord**, she isn’t only falling short as a wife. She is falling short as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- This is completely out of the realm of the wife’s *nature* or *personality*.
- This has nothing to do with a husband’s intelligence, giftedness, or capability. It has to do with honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.
- This has nothing to do with whether or not the husband is right on a particular issue. It has to do with Jesus being right.
- This means that a woman should take great care in how she *chooses* her husband. Instead of looking for an attractive man, instead of looking for a wealthy man, instead of looking for a romantic man, a woman should first look for a man she can *respect*. G. Campbell Morgan recalls the story of the older Christian woman who had never married, and she explained, “I never met a man who could master me.” She had the right idea.
- If you want to please Jesus, if you want to honor Him, then **submit to your own husband as to the Lord**.

iv. “There can be no more compelling motive for any action than this; and every Christian wife who is concerned above everything else to please the Lord Jesus Christ, will find no difficulty in this paragraph; indeed it will be her greatest delight to do what the Apostle tells us here.” (Lloyd-Jones)

2. (Ephesians 5:23-24) Reasons for a Christian wife’s submission.

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

a. **For**: The command given in Ephesians 5:22 is difficult. God knows this, so He also includes *reasons* for His command. He wants us to understand the principle behind the command.

i. The first reason for a Christian wife’s submission to her husband is found in Ephesians 5:22, in the words *as to the Lord*. This means that the motive of her submission must be obedience and respect to Jesus, instead of obedience and respect to her husband.

b. **For the husband is the head of the wife**: Paul states here the second reason for a wife’s submission. It is because the husband is **the head of the wife**. In its full sense **head** has the

idea of *headship* and *authority*. It means to have the appropriate responsibility to lead and the matching accountability. It is right and appropriate to submit to someone who is our **head**.

i. When you look at the Biblical idea of headship in other passages such as 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 3, the emphasis is put constantly upon the fact that the man was created first and not the woman. So there is a priority *by creation* for man. The Scriptures also emphasize the fact that the woman was made out of the man, taken out of the man to show a connection to him, and that she was meant to be a help for man, a help for man that was fitting for him.
ii. "Notice that the Apostles lay great stress upon it. Man was created first. But not only that; man was also made the lord of creation. It was to man that this authority was given over the brute animal creation; it was man who was called upon to give them names. Here are indications that man was put into a position of leadership, lordship, and authority and power. He takes the decisions, he gives the rulings. That is the fundamental teaching with regard to this whole matter." (Lloyd-Jones)

iii. Passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:7-10 make the point that God created Adam first, and gave him responsibility over Eve. This happened *before* the fall. Therefore, this passage makes it clear that before and after the fall, God ordained there be different roles between husband and wife. The difference in roles between husband and wife are not the result of the fall, and are not erased by our new life in Jesus.
iv. "What he is saying is that the woman is different, that she is the complement of the man. What he does prohibit is that woman should seek to be manly, that is, that a woman should seek to behave as a man, or that a woman should seek to usurp the place, the position, and the power which have been given to man by God Himself. That is all he is saying. It is not slavery; he is exhorting his readers to realize what God has ordained." (Lloyd-Jones)

v. "When a woman gets married she gives up her name, she takes the name of her husband. That is Biblical, and also the custom of the whole world. That teaches us the relationship between the husband and the wife. It is not the husband who changes his name, but the wife." (Lloyd-Jones)

c. **As also Christ is head of the church… Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands**: Paul presents here a third reason for a Christian wife's submission to her husband. She should submit because the relationship of the husband and wife is a model of the union between Jesus and the Church.

i. This point is simple and clear. We have a model for the marriage relationship: the relationship between Jesus and the church. In that relationship, the headship of Jesus Christ is unquestioned. So also is the husband the head of the "team" that is the one-flesh relationship of husband and wife.

ii. Perhaps the Christian wife doesn't want a "head" or a leader of the team between husband and wife. If that is the case, the wife does not understand a Biblical marriage, and will always work against it in one way or another. It is the same dynamic as a Christian saying he doesn't want Jesus to be his "head."

d. **And He is the Savior of the body**: We can understand how the **husband is head of the wife** in the same way that **Christ is head of the church**. Sometimes it is difficult to see how the husband is the *Savior of the body* in the way that Jesus is the **Savior of the body**, that is, of the Church.

i. Lloyd-Jones thinks Paul used the wider understanding of the word **Savior**, which can simply mean *preserver*. 1 Timothy 4:10 speaks of Jesus being *the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe*. How can Jesus be the *Savior of all men*? In the sense that He *preserves* all men and *blesses* all men with good things from heaven above. It is in this way that husbands are to be their wife's *savior*. Paul essentially repeats the same idea in Ephesians 5:28-29: *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church*.

ii. "What, then, is the doctrine? It is clearly this. The wife is the one who is kept, preserved, guarded, shielded, provided for by the husband. That is the relationship — as Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, so the husband nourishes and cherishes the wife — and the wife should realize that that is her position in this relationship." (Lloyd-Jones)

e. **Of the body**: The picture of the **body** shows how essential a Christian wife's submission is. "The wife must not act before the husband. All the teaching indicates that he is the head, that he ultimately controls. So she not only does not act independently of him, she does not act before him… it is equally true to say that she must not delay action, she must not stall action, she must not refuse to act. Go back to the analogy of the body. Think of somebody who has had a 'stroke'… the arm is not healthy, it resists movement." (Lloyd-Jones)

i. "We can sum it up thus: The teaching is that the initiative and the leadership are ultimately the husband's, but the action must always be co-ordinated. That is the meaning of this picture — co-ordinated action but leadership in the head. There is no sense of inferiority suggested by this. The wife is not inferior to her husband; she is different." (Lloyd-Jones)

f. **Therefore**: We see in this passage three reasons for a wife's submission to her husband:

- It is part of her obedience to Jesus (*as to the Lord*).
- It is appropriate to the order of creation (**the husband is the head of the wife**).
- It is appropriate because of the model of the relationship between Jesus and the Church (**as also Christ is head of the church… as the church is subject to Christ**).

i. The first reason is compelling enough, but in itself it doesn't close the issue. If all we had was *as to the Lord*, it might be fair enough to ask, "Aren't men to live *as to the Lord* also? Shouldn't men submit to their wives in obedience to Jesus in the same way?" Then you wouldn't have a real "head" of the home. This is the goal in some marriages. "No one is really in charge. We're equal partners. I'll submit to you sometimes and you submit to me other times. We'll just let Jesus be our head and work out each situation as it comes along and see who will submit to whom."

ii. To say it simply, that isn't a Biblical marriage relationship. It ignores the essential order of creation, and it ignores the model of the relationship between Jesus and the Church. This leads us to carefully notice something in general about submission. The principle of submission is presented in many different ways in the New Testament.

- Jesus submitted to His parents (Luke 2:51).
- Demons submitted to the disciples (Luke 10:17).
- Citizens should submit to government authority (Romans 13:1 and 5, Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13).
- The universe will submit to Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:27 and Ephesians 1:22).
- Unseen spiritual beings submit to Jesus (1 Peter 3:22).
- Christians should submit to church leaders (1 Corinthians 16:15-16 and Hebrews 13:17).
- Wives should submit to husbands (Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:5, 1 Peter 3:5, Ephesians 5:22-24).
- The church should submit to Jesus (Ephesians 5:24).
- Servants should submit to masters (Titus 2:9 and 1 Peter 2:18).
- Christians should submit to God (Hebrews 12:9 and James 4:7).

iii. We notice that none of these relations are reversed. For example, masters are never told to submit to servants, Jesus is never told to submit to the church, and so forth. The consistent use of the idea of submission in the Scriptures illustrates basically a "one-way" submission according to how God has arranged the order of authority.

iv. If Paul stopped at Ephesians 5:24, it would be easy for a Christian wife to feel that all the obligations were on her. Thankfully, he continues and shows what obligations the Christian husband has in marriage. But the Christian wife still has her obligations.

- Both husband and wife are called to die to self — submission is the way the wife does it.
- Both husband and wife are called to sacrifice — submission is the way the wife does it.
- Both husband and wife are called to see their marriage as a model of Jesus' relationship with the church — submission is how the wife honors that model.

- Both husband and wife are called to honor the order of creation — submission is the way the wife fulfills her place in that order.

g. **To their own husbands in everything**: Paul says that the wife should be subject to her husband **in everything**. Does he really mean **everything**? This needs to be understood in same way we understand submission in other spheres. For example, when Paul says in Romans 13 that the Christian must submit to the state, we understand there are exceptions. So, what are the exceptions to **everything**?

i. *When the husband asks or expects the wife to sin*, she is free from her obligation to submit. This applies in a place of clearly Biblical sin — such as signing a fraudulent tax return. It also applies in matters of true Christian conscience. But we must be very careful to distinguish between true Christian conscience and mere opinion. Yet the wife does not have to submit to a request to commit sin.

ii. *When the husband is medically incapacitated or insane*, she is free from her obligation to submit. A wife does not have to submit to the requests a husband makes when he is insane or medically incapacitated.

iii. *When the husband is physically abusive and endangers the safety of the wife or children*, the wife is free from her obligation to submit. She does not have to submit to his violence.

iv. *When the husband breaks the marriage bond by adultery*. Obviously, a wife does not have to submit to her husband's adultery, and just accept it. The Bible says she has the right to "come out from under his rank" in such cases. "If the husband has been guilty of adultery the wife is no longer bound to give him obedience in everything. She can divorce him, she is allowed to do so by the Scripture. She is entitled to do so because adultery breaks the unity, breaks the relationship. They are now separate and no longer one. He has broken the unity, he has gone out of it. So we must not interpret this Scripture as teaching that the wife is irrevocably, inevitably bound to an adulterous husband for the rest of her life. She may choose to be — that is for her to decide. All I am saying is, that this Scripture does not command it." (Lloyd-Jones)

3. (Ephesians 5:25a) The simple command to Christian husbands: love your wife.

Husbands, love your wives,

a. **Husbands, love your wives**: Paul's words to Christian husbands safeguards his previous words to wives. Though wives are to submit to their husbands, it never excuses husbands acting as tyrants over their wives.

i. According to 2 Timothy 1:7, God has given us the spirit of power — but also of love. Power, in their Christian life, is always to be exercised in love. "It is not naked power, it is not the power of a dictator or a little tyrant, it is not the idea of a man who arrogates to himself certain

rights, and tramples upon his wife's feelings and so on, and sits in the home as a dictator… No husband is entitled to say that he is the head of the wife unless he loves his wife… So the reign of the husband is to be a reign and a rule of love; it is a leadership of love." (Lloyd-Jones)

b. **Love your wives**: Paul used the ancient Greek word *agape*. The ancient Greeks had four different words we translate **love**. It is important to understand the difference between the words, and why the apostle Paul chose the Greek word *agape* here.

i. *Eros* was one word for love. It described, as we might guess from the word itself, *erotic* love. It refers to love driven by *desire*.

ii. *Storge* was the second word for love. It refers to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child or between family members in general. It is love driven by *blood*.

iii. *Philia* is the third word for love. It speaks of a brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. It might be described as the highest love of which man, without God's help, is capable of. It is *fondness*, or love driven by *common interests and affection*.

iv. *Agape* is the fourth word for love. *Eros*, *storge*, and *philia* each speak about love that is *felt*. These describe "instinctive" love, love that comes spontaneously from the heart. Paul *assumes* that *eros* (desire) and *phileo* (fondness) are present. Christians should not act as if these things do not matter in the marriage relationship. They do matter. But Paul's real point is to address a higher kind of love, *agape* love. *Agape* describes a different kind of love. It is a love more of *decision* than of the *spontaneous heart*. It is as much a matter of the *mind* as the *heart*, because it chooses to love the undeserving.

v. "*Agape* has to do with the *mind*: it is not simply an emotion which rises unbidden in our hearts; it is a principle by which we deliberately live." (Barclay) *Agape* really doesn't have much to do with *feelings* — it has to do with *decisions*.

vi. Strictly speaking, *agape* can't be defined as "God's love," because men are said to *agape* sin and the world (John 3:19 and 1 John 2:15). Yet it can be defined as a sacrificial, giving, absorbing, love. The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.

- It is a love that loves without changing.
- It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment.
- It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing.
- It is love that loves even when it is rejected.
- *Agape* love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given. It gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive.

vii. We can read this passage and think that Paul is saying, “Husbands, be kind to your wives.” Or “husbands, be nice to your wives.” There is no doubt that for many marriages this would be a huge improvement. But that isn’t what Paul wrote about. What he really meant is, “Husbands, continually decide to practice self-denial for the sake of your wives.”

4. (Ephesians 5:25b-27) The standard and example of a Christian husband’s love.

Just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

a. **Just as Christ also loved the church**: Jesus’ *attitude* towards the church is a pattern for the Christian husband’s love to his wife. This shows that the loveless marriage doesn’t please God and does not fulfill His purpose. This is love given to the undeserving. This is love given *first*. This is love that may be *rejected*, but still loves.

i. “It is possible that some husbands might say, ‘How can I love such a wife as I have?’ It might be a supposable case that some Christian was unequally yoked together with an unbeliever, and found himself for ever bound with a fetter to one possessed of a morose disposition, of a froward temper, of a bitter spirit. He might therefore say, ‘Surely I am excused from loving in such a case as this. It cannot be expected that I should love that which is in itself so unlovely.’ But mark, beloved, the wisdom of the apostle. He silences that excuse, which may possibly have occurred to his mind while writing the passage, by taking the example of the Savior, who loved, not because there was loveliness in his Church, but in order to make her lovely.” (Spurgeon)

b. **Just as Christ also loved the church**: We might say that Paul taught two things at once here. He taught about the nature of the relationship between husband and wife, and he taught about the relationship between Christ and His Church. Each illustrates important principles about the other.

i. It demonstrates the Jesus loves his church with a *special* love. Jesus loves the world and died for the world; but just as a husband can have a general love for everyone, he must also have a *special* love for his bride.

ii. “I ask you to notice what is not always the case with regard to the husband and the wife, that *the Lord Jesus loves his church unselfishly*; that is to say, he never loved her for what she has, but what she is; nay, I must go further than that, and say that he loved her, not so much for what she is, but what he makes her as the object of his love. He loves her not for

what comes to him from her, or with her, but for what he is able to bestow upon her. His is the strongest love that ever was." (Spurgeon)

iii. Using the love of an ideal husband as a pattern, we could say that Jesus has a *constant* love for His people, an *enduring* love for His people, and a *hearty* love for His people.

c. **And gave Himself for her**: Jesus' *action* towards the church is a pattern. This helps us define what *agape* love is all about: it is self-sacrificing love. How should a husband love his wife? **As Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it**. What did that involve? Perhaps the best statement concerning that matter is in Philippians 2:5-8, where it shows that the focus of Jesus was on the church. It was for the church that He did what He did, not for Himself.

i. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross* (Philippians 2:5-8).

ii. This word is especially needful for husbands who see headship in submission with worldly understanding instead of godly understanding. Some husbands think that because God said they are the head of the home and the wife is obligated to submit to them that they do not have to be humble, lay down their lives, and sacrifice for the benefit of their wife. They need to understand the difference in thinking between worldly headship and godly headship.

- Worldly headship says, "I am your head, so you take your orders from me and must do whatever I want."
- Godly headship says, "I am your head, so I must care for you and serve you."
- Worldly submission says, "You must submit to me, so here are the things I want you to do for me."
- Godly submission says, "You must submit to me, so I am accountable before God for you. I must care for you and serve you."

iii. This is not the height of romantic love as the world knows it. This isn't love based on looks, image, the ability to be suave and cutting-edge cool. This is love expressed through *sacrifice*.

d. **That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word**: When Jesus **gave Himself** for the church on the cross, it also provided cleansing from every stain sin makes. Since the work of Jesus on the cross comes to us through the Word of God and the preached word, it can be said that we are washed **of water by the word**.

i. When Paul wrote **the washing of water by the word**, he used the ancient Greek word *rhema*. "It is true that *rhema* is not quite the same as *logos*, but carries with it the definite

sense of the *spoken* word… it may have the sense of that truth as *proclaimed*, the *preached* Word or Gospel." (Salmond) There is something cleansing about being under the teaching of the Word.

ii. "I do not believe that baptism is intended here, nor even referred to. I know that the most of commentators say it is. I do not think it. It strikes me that one word explains the whole. Christ sanctifies and cleanses us by the washing of water, but what sort of water? By the Word. The water which washes away sin, which cleanses and purifies the soul, is the Word." (Charles Spurgeon, a confirmed Baptist)

iii. This speaks of Jesus' work for the church. Obviously, a husband cannot spiritually cleanse his wife the same way Jesus cleanses the church. Yet a husband can take an active, caring interest in his wife's spiritual health. As the priest of the home, he helps her keep "clean" before the Lord.

e. **That He might present her to Himself a glorious church**: This means that Jesus Himself shares His prospects, His future with His bride. A Christian husband should also share his prospects and future with his wife. Even as a wife will share in the husband's future, so we will share in the glorious future of our Lord.

i. "Since the Church is not fit for Christ by nature, he resolved to make her so by grace. He could not be in communion with sin. Therefore it must be purged away. Perfect holiness was absolutely necessary in one who was to be the bride of Christ. He purposes to work that in her, and to make her meet to be his spouse eternally. The great means by which he attempts to do this, is, 'he gave himself for her.' " (Spurgeon)

f. **Not having spot or wrinkle**: The idea isn't that the bride is in this state *before* the wedding day, but *on* the wedding day. We are made this pure in heaven when we are joined to Jesus Christ in a way beyond all previous experience.

i. "The Holy Ghost seems to exhaust language to describe this purity. He says, 'Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!' She shall have nothing like a spot, nothing that can he construed into a wrinkle; she shall be fair, and the world shall be compelled to acknowledge that she is." (Spurgeon)

ii. "When He presents her to Himself, with all the principalities and powers and the serried ranks for all the potentates of heaven looking on at this marvelous thing, and scrutinizing and examining her, there will not be a single blemish, there will not be a spot upon her. The most careful examination will not be able to detect the slightest speck of unworthiness or of sin." (Lloyd-Jones)

5. (Ephesians 5:28-29) The application of the principles to the duty of a Christian husband.

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church.

a. **So husbands**: In Ephesians 5:22-24, Paul gave three reasons for a Christian wife's submission to her husband. In addressing the Christian husbands, Paul also gave three reasons to love their wife:

i. First, they should love their wife this way because *this is what love is*. Paul indicates this in Ephesians 5:25: *Husbands, love your wives*.

ii. Second, they should love their wife this way because *the relationship between husband and wife has a pattern*: the relationship of Jesus and His church. Paul indicates this in Ephesians 5:25-29: *Just as Christ also loved the church… So husbands ought to love their own wives… just as the Lord does the church*.

iii. The third reason is found in Ephesians 5:28-32. The Christian husband must love his wife this way *because you are one with her*, just as Jesus is one with the church.

b. **So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies**: The single word **as** is important. Paul did not say, "So ought men to love their wives in the same way as they love their bodies." That would be an improvement in many cases, but that is not the meaning. The meaning is, "So ought men to love their wives because they *are* their own bodies."

i. A man must love his wife as he would his body, as a part of himself. As Eve was a part of Adam, taken out of his side, so the wife is to the man because she is a part of him. The reality of this union must dominate the husband's thinking and actions in marriage.

ii. "The Apostle puts it in this form in order that a husband may see that he cannot detach himself from his wife. You cannot detach yourself from your body, so you cannot detach yourself from your wife. She is a part of you, says the Apostle, so remember that always." (Lloyd-Jones)

iii. "The husband must realize that his wife is a part of himself. He will not feel this instinctively; he has to be taught it; and the Bible in all its parts teaches it. In other words, the husband must understand that he and his wife are not two: they are one." (Lloyd-Jones)

iv. This means for that success in the marriage relationship, we must *think* and *understand*. The world relies upon overly romantic ideas about love and upon feelings to make marriage work, and never really makes a person *think* and *understand* about marriage.

c. **He who loves his wife loves himself**: Simply said, when you love your wife, *you benefit yourself*. Perhaps it is better to put it in the negative: *when you neglect your wife, you neglect yourself, and it will come back to hurt you.*

i. We all know what it is like to neglect something — like a noise or a maintenance issue on an automobile — and it comes back to hurt us. Husbands, it is *even more true* regarding your wife, because *she is part of you*. Only a fool neglects his own broken arm or infected leg; yet there are many foolish husbands who hurt or neglect their wives and they do and will suffer from it.

ii. "On the practical level, therefore, the whole of the husband's thinking must include his wife also. He must never think of himself in isolation or detachment. The moment he does so he has broken the most fundamental principle of marriage. In a sense, the moment a man thinks of himself in isolation he has broken the marriage. And he has no right to do that! There is a sense in which he cannot do it, because the wife is a part of himself. But if it happens he is certain to inflict grievous damage on his wife; and it is damage in which he himself will be involved because she is a part of him." (Lloyd-Jones)

d. **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it**: Any man in his right mind is going to take care of **his own flesh**, even if it is just in the sense of feeding and clothing and caring for his own body. He knows that if he doesn't, *he* is going to suffer for it. In the same way, once we know the Biblical fact of this unity, if we are in our right minds we will *nourish and cherish* our wives because she is part of us.

e. **Just as the Lord does the church**: The principle of *oneness* also is dominant in the relationship between Jesus and His people.

- There is oneness of *life*: We share the same vital resurrection life that resides in Jesus Himself.
- There is oneness of *service*: We are privileged to be co-workers with our Lord.
- There is oneness of *feeling*: Jesus feels a unique sympathy with us, and we feel a unique sympathy with Him.
- There is oneness of mutual *necessity*: We cannot exist without Him and He cannot exist without us, in the sense that a redeemer is not a redeemer without any redeemed; a savior is not a savior without any saved
- There is oneness of *nature*: The same genetic code links us with our Savior, and we are partakers of the divine nature
- There is oneness of *possession*: We share in the riches of His glory both now and in the age to come
- There is oneness of present *condition*: When our Savior is lifted high, so are His people with Him.
- There is oneness of *future destiny*: We will be glorified with Him.

6. (Ephesians 5:30-32) The mystical union between Jesus and the church, and its relation to marriage.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

a. **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones**: Paul here brings the analogy back in a circle. First, the relationship between Jesus and the church spoke to us about the husband-wife relationship. Now the marriage relationship speaks to us about the relationship between Jesus and His people.

b. **For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh**: Paul quoted this essential passage from Genesis 2:24. Relevant to marriage, it shows that just as the first man and the first woman were one — she was taken from him, and then brought back to him — so it could be said of every married man today that he is **joined to his wife**. God did the joining. Husbands can resent it, they can resist it, they can ignore it, but it doesn't change the fact.

i. It shows a fundamental principle for promoting oneness in marriage: there must be a *leaving* (of former associations) and a *cleaving* (joining together as one).

c. **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church**: It would be easy to think that the Genesis 2:24 passage (also quoted by Jesus in Matthew 19:5) *only* speaks about marriage. Paul wants us to know that it also speaks about the relationship between **Christ and the church**.

i. This is true in regard to the pattern of the first man and the first woman. "Woman was made at the beginning as the result of an operation which God performed upon man. How does the church come into being? As the result of an operation which God performed on the Second Man, His only begotten, beloved Son on Calvary's hill. A deep sleep fell upon Adam. A deep sleep fell upon the Son of God, He gave up the ghost, He expired, and there in that operation the church was taken out. As the woman was taken out of Adam, so the church is taken out of Christ. The woman was taken out of the side of Adam; and it is from the Lord's bleeding, wounded side that the church comes." (Lloyd-Jones)

ii. It is also true in regard to the pattern of marriage in general.

- It shows us that Jesus wants more than just an external, surface relationship.
- It shows us that Jesus wants us to be *one* with Him.
- It shows us that there is a sense in which Jesus is incomplete without us. Adam was incomplete without Eve; we can say that Eve makes up the "fullness" of Adam and makes up

that which was lacking in him. And that is exactly what the church does for Jesus; Ephesians 1:23 says of the church, *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*.

iii. It shows the common connection of *unity* and *oneness* in the two relationships. "Unity, mark you for that is the essence of the marriage-bond. We are one with Christ, who made himself one with his people." (Spurgeon)

7. (Ephesians 5:33) A summary comment to husbands and wives.

Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

a. **Nevertheless**: Paul really taught on two things at once. He teaches about marriage, but he also teaches about God's *pattern* for marriage — the relationship between Jesus and His people. So in Ephesians 5:31 and 32 he has focused on the relationship between Jesus and His people and is getting really excited about it. Then Paul seemed to remember that his original topic was marriage, so that is why he used the word **nevertheless** in Ephesians 5:33.

i. This was Paul's way of saying, "I know I got off the topic a little bit. So let's come back to the matter of marriage, and I'll sum it up for you. **Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband**."

b. **Let each one of you**: This means that *everyone* is included. We can say this about all the teaching on marriage. It is easy to say, "Well, I'm just not that sort of person, so I'll never do very well." Husbands do it, saying, "I'm just not very loving." Wives do it, saying, "I'm just not the submissive sort." But no matter what our natural disposition is, we have a target to shoot for, and **let each one of you in particular** means we all should set our eyes on the target the Bible shows us.

c. **So love his own wife as himself**: Paul again stressed the *unity* that a husband must recognize and let shape his thinking and his actions.

i. "Unity is the central principle in marriage; and it is because so many people in this modern world have never had any conception of what is involved in marriage, from the standpoint of unity, that they are riding so loosely to it and breaking their vows and pledges, so much so that divorce has become one of the major problems in our age. They have never caught sight of this unity; they are still thinking in terms of their individuality, and so you have two people asserting their rights, and therefore you get clashes and discord and separation. The answer to all that, says Paul, is to understand this great principle of unity." (Lloyd-Jones)

ii. "He is given the position of dignity and of leadership and of headship; and if he understands what it means he will never abuse it, he will never misuse it, by being harsh or dictatorial or unkind or unfair. To be guilty of such behaviour is a denial of the marriage principle, and means that there is an absence of the Spirit." (Lloyd-Jones)

d. **Let the wife see**: Paul called the wife to pay special attention here. This may be a point where many wives might excuse themselves for one reason or another, but Paul emphasized, "**Let the wife see**."

e. **Let the wife see that she respects her husband**: This word **respects** is the same word often used of the reverential fear and awe the disciples had toward Jesus. It is a strong statement, but it indicates that the wife should respect the husband so highly that it points in this direction.

i. "The Apostle used a very striking word here. It is rightly translated in the Authorized Version as 'reverence'; but the word really means 'fear'. 'And the wife see that she fears her husband'. But we must remember that there are different types of fear… he speaks of 'reverential' fear. What it really means is 'deference', 'with reverential obedience'." (Lloyd-Jones)

ii. "The wife is to treat her husband with deference; in other words, she is to recognize this biblical and Christian view of marriage, she is to regard the husband as her head, the head of this new unit. They are both one, but there is a head to the unit, as there is a head to our body, as Christ is the Head of the church." (Lloyd-Jones)

f. **Let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband**: If Paul's message in this great passage could be boiled down to two principles which must govern our thinking and our actions as married people, those two are:

- Husbands: Understand that you and your wife are one, are a unity.
- Wives: Understand that your unity has a head — your husband.

i. Wives are quick to embrace and understand the *husband's* principle, and they want *that* to be the governing principle of the marriage.

ii. Husbands are quick to embrace and understand the *wife's* principle, and they want *that* to be the governing principle of the marriage.

iii. But we must let *our* principle govern *us*. When you have a husband thinking, "I'm one with my wife, and I must think and act that way," and a wife thinking, "My husband is the head of our oneness, and I need to respect and defer to him as the head," then you will have a healthy, Biblical marriage.

iv. "The supreme thing always is to consider our Lord Jesus Christ. If a husband and wife are together considering Him, you need have no worry about their relationship to each other." (Lloyd-Jones)

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Chuck Smith
Sermon Notes for Ephesians 5:22

Intro. God created men and women different, that seems like a stupid thing to say and indeed it is. But there are voices today that are trying to say that we are alike and on equal par with each other.

A. The woman in the scripture is referred to as the weaker vessel.
1. Physiologically it is quite obvious that the man is stronger than the woman.
2. Our emotional make up is different.
a. Men are much coarser than the woman.
b. The woman has a much finer temperament.
1. The man says, "I'm hungry."
2. The woman says, "I'm starving to death."
3. She is more apt to respond emotionally than a man. That is why under the law a father or a husband could break a vow that his daughter or wife had made.
B. It was God who created us with these differences and when He made the rules for marriage He took these differences into account.
I. "WIVES SUBMIT YOURSELVES UNTO YOUR OWN HUSBAND AS UNTO THE LORD." Remember the context is "submitting yourselves one to another."
A. This is a subject that no doubt will immediately develop controversy.
1. We in the Western world are living in an age of the woman's liberation.
2. Some go so far as to say that the Bible must be interpreted according to the culture of the days in which it was written.
B. It is interesting that this teaching by Paul concerning marriage relationships was a radical departure from the culture of his day.
1. The morning prayer of the Jewish man had a phrase thanking God that he was not a slave, a Gentile or a woman.
a. The woman had no rights, she was considered the property of her husband, after all he bought her from her father.
b. He could divorce her for almost any cause, but she had no right of divorce except if her husband became an apostate, a leper or engaged in a disgusting trade.
2. In the Greek world prostitution was considered a necessity of life. It was said that every man should have a courtesan for the sake of pleasure, a concubine for daily cohabitation, and a wife to bear his legitimate children. She was expected to run the house, bear the legitimate children, but he was to find his pleasure elsewhere. There were no laws prohibiting divorce thus it was just by whim.
3. In Rome divorce was so common that Seneca said, "Women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married." They dated their years by the names of their husbands.
B. The teaching of a wife's submission to her husband however goes way back to the beginning. In Genesis 3 as God is pronouncing His judgment upon Eve for her sin He said,

GEN 3:16 I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

1. Note that God said, "Her desire shall be to her husband, and he shall rule over her."
C. This concept is carried all through the Bible.
1. We find in the book of Esther the near panic of the men when Queen Vashti refused to perform for her husband the King.

EST 1:16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that [are] in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

EST 1:17 For [this] deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

EST 1:18 [Likewise] shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus [shall there arise] too much contempt and wrath.

EST 1:19 If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

EST 1:20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

2. This story has nothing to do with Biblical injunctions of a wife's submission to her husband, but shows the fear men have of women taking over.
3. You see when God made man He knew that man had this need be in control and to dominate. He being the stronger felt the responsibility to be the protector and provider.
D. Paul referring to a practice in the early church when they followed the pattern of the Jewish synagog in the men sitting on one side and the women on the other, and sometimes the woman calling across the room to her husband for clarification of a particular issue commanded the women to keep silence in the church.
1CO 14:33 For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

1CO 14:34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

1CO 14:35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

1. Note they are required to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
E. Paul to the Colossians said,
COL 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

1. Here is a condition, "As it is fit in the Lord." If it is not fit in the Lord, she is under no obligation to submit.
a. During the hippie era we had cases where unbelieving husbands were demanding their wives to prostitute their bodies that the husband might buy drugs.
b. In those cases as Peter said, "We must obey God rather than man."
F. To the Corinthians Paul declared,
1CO 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God.

1. I believe that there is a definite chain of command described here, and that if a link of the chain is broken you must jump over that link.
2. i.e. If a husband is not subject to Christ and is making unchristian demands upon his wife, she must then skip that link and be subject unto Jesus.
G. Paul said to Titus that the older women were to teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
H. Peter commanded,
1PET 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, [be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

1PE 3:2 While they behold your chaste conversation [coupled] with fear.

1PE 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

1PE 3:4 But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

1PE 3:5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

1PE 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

II. PAUL GOES ON TO SAY IN VERSE 23, "FOR THE HUSBAND IS THE HEAD OF THE WIFE EVEN AS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH AND THE SAVIOR OF THE BODY."
A. The word head means the authority over. Christ is the authority over His church and it is the model for the home, the husband in subjection to Christ is to be the authority over the home.
B. This seems to be the clear, consistent teaching of the scriptures and to follow this rule will bring peace and tranquillity into the home.
III. SO AS THE CHURCH IS SUBJECT TO CHRIST, SO LET THE WIVES BE TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS IN ALL THINGS.
A. Don't stop, "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it."
B. Next week we will be teaching the husbands how to transform their wives from a tigress to a kitten.

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Chuck Smith
Sermon Notes for Ephesians 5:22-33

"CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH"

I. THE CLOSEST AND MOST INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP THAT MAN CAN EXPERIENCE IS THAT OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.
A. God said that the two shall be one flesh.
1. I don't know if you can get any closer than that.
2. Whether the one flesh refers to the act of cohabitation or in the fruit of that cohabitation I do not know.
a. It is true that your child gets half of its genes from each of you, so that two of you produced that one flesh.
b. That should silence that look what your kid did now, bit.
B. The second thing that is said about this relationship was said by Adam concerning Eve.
1. "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman for she was taken out of man."
a. The King James translation of the Hebrew word tsela as rib is perhaps correct, the same word is also beam thus the rib as a part of the structure. Only twice is that word translated rib in the Old Testament, 19 times it is translated side.
b. Dr. Wilson in his excellent book "Wonders of the Human Body" opts for the translation side, and suggests that God created Eve, and then gave her a blood transfusion from the side of Adam, hence, "Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."
c. Isn't it interesting that if we existed because of the evolutionary processes, that both sexes would have had to have come to the same degree of development at the same time in order to reproduce.

C. Using the marriage of a man and woman to symbolize the relationship of Christ and the church we thus see that we have become one with Him. Verse 31 For the two shall become one flesh.
1. "And in that day, you will know that I am in the Father and you are in Me, and I in you."
2. In the prayer of Jesus in John 17 he prayed,

JOH 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

JOH 17:23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

3. To the Galatians Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me."
D. The further symbol is that of Eve being taken out of the side of Adam, and thus being as in verse 30 of his body and of his flesh and of his bones.
1. We have been given life by the blood of Jesus Christ that flowed forth when the soldier with his spear pierced the side of Jesus.
2. So as Eve came from the pierced side of Adam, so the church came from the pierced side of Jesus, and are thus, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones.
E. The Lord desires this kind of intimacy with you.
II. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WE FIND THAT THIS IS THE RELATIONSHIP THAT GOD SOUGHT WITH ISRAEL.
A. Many times Israel was spoken of as a faithless wife.
1. The whole book of Hosea brings out the parallels between the prophet and his wife, with God and the nation of Israel. God spoke of a future day when He would betroth them forever.

Hsa 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

Hsa 2:20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

2. The prophet Isaiah wrote,

ISA 54:5 For thy Maker [is] thine husband; the LORD of hosts [is] his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

ISA 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, (My delight is in her) and thy land Beulah: (married) for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

ISA 62:5 For [as] a young man marrieth a virgin, [so] shall thy sons marry thee: and [as] the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, [so] shall thy God rejoice over thee.

III. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A HUSBAND AND WIFE IS LIKENED TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.
A. So wives are to submit themselves unto their own husbands as unto the Lord. vs. 22
1. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. vs. 23
2. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands.
B. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.
1. Christ gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify if with the washing of the water by the word.
2. That He might present it to Himself as a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that it should be holy and without blemish.
a. Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

2CO 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present [you as] a chaste virgin to Christ.

3. Psalm 45 is a beautiful picture of the Messiah with His bride. The first 6 verses speak of the glory of the King. Beginning with verse 7 the Psalmist begins to speak of the bride,

PSA 45:7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

PSA 45:8 All thy garments [smell] of myrrh, and aloes, [and] cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

PSA 45:9 Kings' daughters [were] among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

PSA 45:10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

PSA 45:11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he [is] thy Lord; and worship thou him.

PSA 45:12 And the daughter of Tyre [shall be there] with a gift; [even] the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.

PSA 45:13 The king's daughter [is] all glorious within: her clothing [is] of wrought gold.

PSA 45:14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

PSA 45:15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

4. Paul writing to the Colossians said,

COL 1:27 To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

COL 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

5. In the Song of Solomon which many see as the love song between Christ and the church, the bridegroom says to the bride,

SOL 4:7 Thou [art] all fair, my love; [there is] no spot in thee.

C. Finally this unity between a husband and wife Paul declares to be a great mystery, for Paul said that he was speaking concerning Christ and His church.

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John Brown
Ephesians 5:25-33

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The last few teachings in Ephesians we have concentrated on Christian behavior.

1. Last week, we specifically dealt with the behavior of a Godly wife as it related to her husband.

2. And in tonight's study we will take a look at the husband's role and his Godly behavior towards her.

II. TEXT

A. **Ephe 5:25** (NKJV) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

1. Let's just take a look at the first part Husbands, love your wives, to help us better understand the rest of Chapter 5.

a) 1Cor 13:1-8 (NKJV) Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have [the] [gift] [of] prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed [the] [poor], and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long [and] is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether [there] [are] prophecies, they will fail; whether [there] [are] tongues, they will cease; whether [there] [is] knowledge, it will vanish away.

b) We're going to take a look at this a little closer, but basically guys, what this is saying is that if you don't love your wives the way the Lord has prescribed (Biblically), you don't amount to much!!!

(1) That's what that word "nothing" means in verse 2.

(2) It doesn't matter if you have the gift of tongues and interpretation, the gift of prophecy, word of knowledge, and faith to move mountains, it still adds up to a big zero.

c) So, how do you know if you are loving your wife the way the Lord prescribes?

(1) Are you kind to her even when it hurts?

(2) Are you envious of her talent or gifts, or just plain smarts?

(3) Do you consider yourself smarter or better than her in any way?

(4) Are you rude to her?

(5) Can she count on the fact that you will do without in order to put her first?

(6) Does she have to walk on "eggshells" around you or is she comfortable being herself.

(7) Does it make you happy when she fails or is embarrassed by something or someone?

(8) Are you patient with her?

(9) Do you make every effort for her succeed in every area of her life?

(a) Now we can go on to the rest of Ephesians 5

2. Ephe 5:25 (NKJV) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

a) The rest of the verse gives us the highest and best example of love and that is Jesus.

(1) Notice the depth of His commitment to His bride!

B. **Ephe 5:25-27** (NKJV).... Christ.... gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

1. Please understand that the church was (and is not now) holy and without blemish!

a) Yet the Lord made a "path" by which He could view His bride is such a way.

b) Unlike most of us husbands who look for reasons to pick our wives apart, Jesus looked for a way to see His bride "without blemish!"

c) A Christian husband should love his wife so much that he is willing to give his own life for her!

(1) John 15:13 (NKJV) "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

C. **Ephe 5:28-29** (NKJV) So husbands ought to love their own 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 the Lord [does] the church.

1. Please notice that the Apostle Paul says that husbands are supposed to love their "own" wives!

a) For many husbands, (and wives), it s easier to look at someone else's spouse and think, "Boy I wish my husband or wife was like them."

b) The remedy for that is to love your spouse more than you love yourself!!

(1) Paul validates that self-love by reminding us that we go to great lengths to make sure that "we" are comfortable, loved and well cared for!

(2) Here's what Paul is getting at:in Christ, you are your wife and she is you. You are one where He is concerned!

D. **Ephe 5:30-31** (NKJV) For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

1. The reference here is out of Genesis 2:23 and it is used to validate Paul's statement that a husband and wife are one flesh just like the church is made one flesh through the cross!

a) When we accept Him as Savior, we become His beautiful bride, and consequently one flesh with Him!

(1) Something that was once "ugly" and "unacceptable" because of sin, is transformed by His righteousness, into something beautiful!!

E. **Ephe 5:32-33** (NKJV) This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife [see] that she respects [her] husband.

1. A "mystery" by Biblical definition, is something that has not yet been revealed.

a) 1Cor 13:9-12 (NKJV) For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

b) I am convinced that we husbands understand these verses very little!

(1) This great "mystery" of Christ and the church and how it relates to us as husbands is a lifetime undertaking!

(2) But this much we do know, men it is time to put away childish things.

III. CONCLUSION

A. If we have been treating our wives with anything or in any way that is less than what the Lord wants, we need to repent, and find out how to do a better job being a Godly husband.

B. Next week we will see how proper Christian behavior affects how we raise our children, and what kind of employer, and employees we are!

Each real believer should have an experience—I believe in experience. Now notice what is to be his experience:

> **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**
>
> **Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord [Eph. 5:18–19].**

My translation puts it like this: "Be not made drunk with wine in which is riot (dissoluteness), but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." This is not just a dry discourse against the evils of drunkenness, even though drunkenness was the besetting sin of the ancient world—and it is still the besetting sin of the hour. It may actually be the sin that will destroy America. But this is not a lecture on drunkenness. Actually, Paul is making a comparison. Don't be drunk with wine. Why not? Because it will stimulate temporarily: it will energize the flesh, but then it will let you down and lead you in the direction of profligacy and dissoluteness and will finally eventuate in desperation and despair and delirium tremens. That is not what you need. Now it is true that people today feel a need for something, which I think explains the cocktail hour and the barroom. They turn to hard liquor to fill that need. If they are not children of God, they have no other resource or recourse. However, the child of God is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is to be the *experience* of the believer.

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? We can find the analogy in the man who is drinking, which is the reason Paul uses it here. The man who is drinking is possessed by the wine. You can tell that a man is drunk. In contrast, it is the Holy Spirit who should be the One to possess the believer. It is a divine intoxication that is to fill that need. This is not an excessive emotionalism but that which furnishes the dynamic for living and for accomplishing something for God. When we are filled by the Holy Spirit, it means that we are *controlled* by the Holy Spirit.

The walk of the believer and his being filled with the Spirit are closely related. Paul says a believer is to walk carefully and "circumspectly" and "be filled with the Spirit." These are commands which are given to the believer. This filling is a constant renewal of the believer's life for strength and action, which is indicated here by the use of the present tense. The Spirit–filled believer not only walks wisely, but his Christian character is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit (see Gal. 5:22–23).

A believer is never commanded to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, but we *are* told that we are "baptized into one body …" (1 Cor. 12:13). Did we do that by some effort on our part? No, it was by our faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit regenerates and indwells us. The Holy Spirit seals us, and the Holy Spirit baptizes us and puts us into the body of believers.

However, the believer needs the filling of the Spirit to serve Christ. The disciples were gathered on the Day of Pentecost. They needed to go out into the world for Christ, and they were filled with the Spirit. They had that experience which enabled them to witness on that day.

To be filled with the Spirit is, I think, as simple as driving to a filling station and saying, "Fill it up." As I start out in the morning with the Lord I say, "Lord, I want to walk today in the Spirit. I cannot do it myself. I need Your power. I need Your help." We as believers need to start the day by asking for an infilling of the Holy Spirit. This is something which is desperately needed by believers.

You may have been filled with the Spirit yesterday or last week, but that won't suffice for today. I buy gasoline from a friend of mine who runs the station. I got my tank filled up one morning, and the next morning I was back again and said, "Fill 'er up." He asked, "Where in the world have you been?" So I told him that I had been down to Yucca Valley, where I had spoken at a sunrise service and then a church service. You see, friend, when you are filled with the Spirit, you will do something for God; you will be walking in the Spirit. But that doesn't mean you will have enough for tomorrow. You need another infilling for tomorrow. The old gas tank needs another fill up.

This is the reason some people can be so mightily used of God one day and feel so empty the next. I have had that feeling, and I'm sure you have. We need a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit. This will enable us to walk in the Spirit. We may stumble and fall at times. My little grandson is learning to walk and right now he has a bruised spot on his forehead and on his nose. But he gets up and tries again and someday he will be a good walker. God wants you and me to learn to walk in the Spirit. He wants us to be filled with the Spirit.

Now what is one of the evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit? It is "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." It is a good thing that the Spirit of God said it was *speaking* one to another. If He had said *singing,* it would have left me out. I think "psalms" refers to the Book of Psalms, as probably all of them had been set to music. "Hymns" were composed by men to glorify God. They were on a very high plane. The "spiritual songs" were less formal than either psalms or hymns. Probably some of them were composed as the person was singing. This is the manifestation of the infilling of the Spirit because He brings joy into the life of the believer.

I'd like to mention one more thing about the comparison of being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. I notice in motels and hotels where we stay as we go across the country that they have what they call the "happy hour" or the "attitude adjustment hour" or something else. Around five o'clock people go in, sit on a bar stool and drink so they will be sociable by six or seven and fit to live with for awhile. I have watched people go into those places, and they didn't look happy when they went in, but neither did they look happy when they came out.

Now, believers need an attitude adjustment, but they don't need the spirits that come from a bottle; they need to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they might radiate the joy of the Lord. The apostle John says that one of the reasons he wrote his epistle was so that "your joy may be full" (see John 15:11). This fullness of joy is to be through our fellowship with the Father and with Jesus Christ (see 1 John 1:3–4). We ought to have a good time and we ought to have fun in the church—I don't mean a period of silliness—but the joy of the Lord should be there. That kind of joy comes through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

> **Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ [Eph. 5:20].**

Another evidence of being filled with the Spirit is an attitude of thankfulness. We note in the Book of Psalms a great amount of thanksgiving and praise to God. And it is on a high level. We don't have enough of that among believers today. We should all say, "Praise the Lord, and thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." Can you say that from the heart? It is no good unless it comes from the heart. The filling of the Spirit produces a life of thankfulness so that we can honestly thank God for *all* things.

As I write this, there is a great deal of nonsense being promoted which I call sloppy agape. I heard recently, "Just say to everybody, 'I love you.'" My friend, if you don't love them, don't say it. If you do love them, *show* it.

Dr. Howard Kelly was a great surgeon and a great obstetrician. He wrote in the field of obstetrics, and his works were classic among doctors for a long time. He was also a great Christian, a wonderful man of God. The story is told of his taking a walk in the country outside the city of Baltimore in one of those lovely rural areas. He became thirsty and stopped at a farmhouse to ask for a drink of water. A little girl answered the door. She said that her parents had gone to town and there was no water in the house but there was cold milk down at the spring. Would he like a glass of milk? He said, "I surely would." So he sat on the porch while she got a glass of milk and brought it to him. My, it was delicious! She asked, "Would you like another glass?" He said, "I surely would." So she brought him another glass. He thanked her, then went on his way down the road, thinking what a lovely little girl she was. Not many days later the little girl became sick. She had a pain in her side and was taken to Johns Hopkins Hospital. Who do you suppose was the doctor who came in and examined her? It was Dr. Kelly, and he recognized her as the little girl who had given him the glasses of milk. He performed the necessary surgery and took special care of her. When it was time for her to go home, her parents came for her and waited anxiously for the bill because they didn't have the money to pay for the

operation and the hospital costs. When the bill was presented to them, they opened it with trembling hands. Under the total balance was written, "Paid in full with two glasses of milk," signed "Dr. Howard Kelly." This was love in action, and the love he expressed was the fruit of the Spirit, because Dr. Kelly was a wonderful Christian.

My friend, you don't have to run around telling everyone you love them—*show* them that you love them. Be filled with the Spirit so there will be love and joy and thanksgiving in your life. This is very practical. This is down where the rubber meets the road.

Why don't you "drive into the filling station" and ask God to fill you up? The old gas tank is empty. You and I don't have anything worthwhile in ourselves. We need to go to Him and tell Him that we are empty and that we need the filling of the Holy Spirit so we can live for Him. We need to see that it is an impossibility by ourselves but that He can do it through us.

Let me repeat this because it is so important: we are told to be filled with the Holy Spirit—this is the only command given to the believer relative to the Holy Spirit. The other ministries of the Holy Spirit are accomplished in us when we receive Christ. Every believer is *regenerated* by the Holy Spirit. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God …" (John 1:12). The believer is also *indwelt* by the Spirit."… Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). And the believer is *sealed* by the Holy Spirit "… in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). Also the believer is *baptized* by the Holy Spirit. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body …" (1 Cor. 12:13). These four ministries of the Holy Spirit take place the moment the believer puts his trust in Christ. It is all accomplished for us. The only thing which is left up to us is to obey His command to be *filled* with the Holy Spirit (see v. 18).

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God [Eph. 5:21].

"Submit" is a very interesting word. It does not mean obey. Paul is not saying that the child of God is a buck private in the rear rank taking orders from somebody in the church who thinks he is a sergeant or a captain. We do take orders, but they are from the Captain of our salvation.

Joshua thought he was a general of the children of Israel. He saw a Man with His sword drawn standing at the edge of the camp. He asked, "… Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" If I may put it in good old Americana, he said, "Who told you to draw a sword? I'm the general here!" It was actually a rebuke. Then that One (who was the preincarnate Christ) turned and said, "… Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come …" (Josh. 5:13–14). Joshua went down on his face and even took off his shoes because he was on holy ground. He learned that he had a Captain.

You and I are under a Captain, but the relationship is not military but on the basis of love. Our Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). I think there is an alternative there: "If you don't love me, forget the commandments."

Now we see here that you and I are to submit ourselves "one to another in the fear of God." That doesn't mean we are to salute and fall down before some human being who outranks us. It does mean that in the fear of Christ we are to walk with one another in lowliness of mind.

If you will turn back to chapter 4, verses 1–2, you will see that Paul begins this section by saying that our walk should be in lowliness and meekness. That is the same thing that we have here. But notice in chapter 4 it begins with "I … beseech you." This is not a command. It is the language of love. The fires of Sinai have died down, and now it is based on what has been done by Christ at Calvary. It is based on the grace of God. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness…."

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." This means that you do not try to run the church. Pastors, officers in the church, members of the church, all of us are to submit ourselves one to another in the fear of Christ. It cannot be a "my way" proposition. No one can say, "I want you to know that I'll do as I

please. If I want to do it this way, I will do it this way." Such an attitude is not a mark of a Spirit–filled believer. Submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God is another mark of being Spirit–filled.

> **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.**
>
> **For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.**
>
> **Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing [Eph. 5:22–24].**

I have been doing some research on the word *submit,* and I have some rather startling things to tell you. The word *submit* relative to wives needs to be understood a little differently from the way it has been so often interpreted in the past. It is not, "Wives, *obey* your husbands." *Submit* is a very mild word. It is a loving word. It means to respond to your own husband as unto the Lord. The way we respond to the Lord is that we love Him because He first loved us. And notice that it says "unto your own husbands." A very personal, loving relationship is the ground for submission. Paul is definitely speaking to believers about Christian marriage.

In this relationship of husband and wife, the man is the aggressor. He is the aggressor physically. He is the one who makes love. He is the aggressor in the home. He should be the breadwinner, the one who goes out with the lunch pail each day. And that doesn't give him the authority to be a top sergeant in the home either, by the way. The wife is to respond to him as the believer is to respond to Christ—in a love relationship.

A rough old boy came to my office one day with a request. He said, "Dr. McGee, I want you to talk to my wife. She's very cold, and she's not acting as a wife should." He didn't know it, but that was a dead giveaway—he was admitting failure as a husband. He showed what kind of a husband he was to draw that kind of response. I asked him, "Have you told her lately that you love her?" He said, "No. She knows I love her. I don't need to tell her that." I said to him, "I think you do. She does not need to tell you that she loves you until you say it first."

Woman is the responder, and man is the aggressor. The man is to say, "I love you," and he is the one who does the proposing. She is the one to say, "Yes." No woman is asked to say "I love you" to a man until he has said "I love you." When a man says he has a cold wife, it is because she has a cold husband. He is not being the husband that he should be. It is not her business to be the aggressor. Her role is the sweet submission of love.

"The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." In what way? It is a love relationship, and the husband is to be the head for the sake of order. You will find in this section of Ephesians that there are four different areas in which there is headship for the sake of order. Wives are to be subject to their husbands. Husbands are to be subject to Christ. Children are to be subject to parents. Servants are to be subject to masters. It is to be a sweet subjection, a willing subjection to someone who loves you. It is to be that kind of relationship. If there is no love in it, the idea of submission isn't worth a snap of the finger.

I have done a great deal of marriage counseling in my day, and I would say that 75 percent of the fault in marriages is on the side of the men. It is the man who is to keep the lovelight burning. In the beautiful Song of Solomon, the bridegroom says to the bride, "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair …" (Song 1:15), and she responds, "My beloved is mine, and I am his …" (Song 2:16). He expresses his love first, and then she responds.

I know someone will say I am very idealistic and romantic about all this. Well, back in the Garden of Eden God made them that way. God started off with a romantic pair, Adam and Eve. Probably He didn't give that woman to Adam until Adam realized that he needed someone. She was given as a *helpmeet*. A helpmeet is just the other half of man. Man is half a man without a wife. God joined them together and called them Adam—not the Adams.

Some young man will say, "Preacher, I'm not that kind of person. I'm no hero." May I say to you that God never said that every girl would fall in love with you. Ninety–nine women may pass you by and see in you only

the uninteresting boy next door. But one day there will come a woman who will see in you the knight in shining armor. It is God who gives that highly charged chemistry between a certain man and a certain woman.

My wife told me she thought I was the knight in shining armor. I want to tell you how it ended. Perhaps you have seen the television commerical of a knight in armor riding across the screen holding a can of cleanser. Do you know where he ended up? In that kitchen! Now that I am retired, that is where I have ended up. A friend of mine told me, "Now that you are retired, do things with your wife. When she washes the dishes, you wash the dishes with her. When she mops the floor, you mop the floor with her!" Well, I'm not about to do that, but I surely do wash dishes more than I ever did before.

Now let me say a word to you if you are a young woman. Perhaps you are not beautiful of face or figure. God never said you would attract every male—only animals do that. Ninety–nine men will pass you by and see no more in you than what Kipling described as a rag, a bone, and a hank of hair. But one day there will come by a man who will love you if you are the right kind of person. You will become his inspiration. You may inspire him to greatness—perhaps to write a book or to compose a masterpiece. If you are his inspiration, do not ignore him, do not run from him. God may have put you together for that very purpose.

You may be saying, "Preacher, you're in the realm of theory. What you are talking about is idealistic. It sounds good in a storybook, but it doesn't happen in real life." You are wrong. It does happen.

Matthew Henry wrote the driest commentary I have ever read in my life, but, I want to tell you, he had a wonderful, romantic life as a young preacher. You would never think in reading his commentary that he was ever a romantic, but he was. In London he met a girl who belonged to the nobility. He was just a poor boy, but he fell in love with her and she loved him. Finally she went to her father to tell him about it, and her father tried to discourage her. He said, "That young man has no background. You don't even know where he came from." She answered, "You are right. I don't know where he came from, but I know where he is going, and I want to go with him!" And she did.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a clerk. He worked in a government customs office in New York City, and he was fired for inefficiency. He came home and sat down discouraged and defeated. His wife came up and put her arm around him and said, "Now, Nathaniel, you can do what you always wanted to do: you can *write*." He wrote *The House of the Seven Gables, The Scarlet Letter,* "The Great Stone Face," and other great works. So, you see, it does work out in life. It has worked out in the lives of multitudes of folk.

Paul's instructions regarding the home teach that the Christian home is to be a mirror of the relation between Christ and the church. Christ's relationship to the church is different from the relationship of husband and wife in that "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." The husband is not the savior of the wife. But in the realm of submission the wife should be subject to the husband and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE CHURCH

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it [Eph. 5:25].

God never asked a woman to submit to any man who doesn't love her and love her like this. Oh, this is Christian love on a high plane. Today young people are finding out about sex, and there are innumerable books on the subject of marriage. I may sound to you like an antiquated preacher when I say that they are nonsense. Only the Christian can know what is real love in marriage, because it is carried to the high plane of the relationship between Christ and the church. There is nothing else like that, my friend.

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word [Eph. 5:26].

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"—that is in the *past*. In the *present* He is sanctifying the church with the water of the Word of God. The cleanser, which is the Bible, is better than any cleanser

advertised on radio or television. The Word of God will not only take out the soiled spots, it will keep you from getting further spots in your life.

> **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish [Eph. 5:27].**

In the *future* He will present it to Himself a glorious church, without a spot or wrinkle but holy and without blemish. We will see the church presented to Christ as a bride adorned for her husband when we study the Book of Revelation. May I say that every woman is beautiful on her wedding day. I have officiated at many weddings during my lifetime, and I have never seen an ugly bride. I have seen them before and after their wedding day, and I can't honestly say that all of them are beautiful. But on the day of their marriage they are beautiful.

No young man engaged to a young lady thinks that she ought to be put through the fires of persecution or the Great Tribulation before he marries her. That is unheard of. So imagine anyone saying that the church must go through the Great Tribulation! She is engaged to *Him,* and He is cleansing the church by the washing of the Word of God. Keep in mind that when we use the word *church* we are not talking about an organization with a steeple, a pulpit, and an organ. We are talking about the body of true believers. This verse means that He is washing each believer, preparing each one for that great event. I believe that is something which is really taking place in our day.

So we have seen the past, present, and future. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. He is sanctifying the church with the washing of water by the Word. In the future the church will be presented to Him as a radiant bride with all sin removed. Then the church will be holy and unblamable.

> **So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.**
>
> **For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:**
>
> **For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.**
>
> **For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.**
>
> **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church [Eph. 5:28–32].**

I have quoted this entire passage so you can see how Paul draws on these two themes and goes back and forth, husband and wife, Christ and the church. After talking about Christ and the church, the subject goes back to husband and wife: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies."

The thing a couple needs for their marriage ceremony is not a champagne supper. They both need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. They will have the greatest honeymoon that any couple ever had. Those sophisticated boys and girls who talk about sex and extramarital relationships today don't even know what real love is. They know a lot about sex, but they do not know anything at all about the beauty and the ecstasy and the sweetness of a real Christian marriage.

The husband is to love his wife because the marriage relationship makes the wife a part of his own body. It is like the church is the body of Christ and Christ is the head of that body. On this basis the husband is the head of the wife. It is unnatural for a man to hate his own flesh, so the husband is to love his wife because she is his own flesh.

Christ, knowing the weakness of the church, nourishes and cherishes her. Husbands are to do the same.

Verse 31 is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. Paul here refers to the relationship that existed in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve. That first couple is a figure of the future union of Christ and the church as Bridegroom and bride. Eve was created to be a helpmeet for Adam. She was taken from his side, not molded from the ground as were the animals. Adam was incomplete until they were together. God fashioned her, and

I think she was the loveliest thing in creation when God brought her to Adam. One wag has said that she had to be better looking than man because God had practiced on man but He had experience when He made woman. She was a helpmeet for Adam. She compensated for what he lacked. She was made for him and they became one. In the Hebrew the word for "man" is *ish* and for "woman" it is *isha*. The word is almost the same—she was taken out of man.

I have two illustrations, taken from history, of this wonderful relationship between man and woman. That kind of thing is often lost today. The "new" morality and sexual freedom are putting a lot of young people in slavery. It simply will not work. God meant for Christians to have this relationship on a much higher plane.

The first illustration is the story of Abelard and Heloise. When John Lord wrote his *Great Women,* he used Heloise as the example of love, marital love. The story concerns a young ecclesiastic by the name of Abelard. He was a brilliant young teacher and preacher in what became the University of Paris. The canon had a niece by the name of Heloïse whom he sent to be under Abelard's instruction. She was a remarkable person; he was a remarkable man. You know the story—they fell madly in love. But according to the awful practice of that day the marriage of a priest was deemed a lasting disgrace. When John Lord wrote their story, he gave this introduction which I would like to share with you. It is almost too beautiful to read in this day. It is like a dew–drenched breeze blowing from a flower–strewn mountain meadow over the slop bucket and pigsty of our contemporary literature. Here is what he wrote:

> When Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, they yet found one flower, wherever they wandered, blooming in perpetual beauty. This flower represents a great certitude, without which few would be happy,—subtle, mysterious, inexplicable,—a great boon recognized alike by poets and moralists, Pagan and Christian; yea, identified not only with happiness, but human existence, and pertaining to the soul in its highest aspirations. Allied with the transient and the mortal, even with the weak and corrupt, it is yet immortal in its nature and lofty in its aims,—at once a passion, a sentiment, and an inspiration.
>
> To attempt to describe woman without this element of our complex nature, which constitutes her peculiar fascination, is like trying to act the tragedy of Hamlet without Hamlet himself,—an absurdity; a picture without a central figure, a novel without a heroine, a religion without a sacrifice. My subject is not without its difficulties. The passion or sentiment is degrading when perverted, it is exalting when pure. Yet it is not vice I would paint, but virtue; not weakness, but strength; not the transient, but the permanent; not the mortal, but the immortal,—all that is ennobling in the aspiring soul.

Abelard and Heloïse, having fallen in love, were not permitted by the church to marry. Therefore they were married secretly by a friend of Abelard. He continued to teach. But the secret came out when a servant betrayed them, and she was forced into a nunnery. Abelard was probably the boldest thinker whom the Middle Ages produced. At the beginning of the twelfth century he began to preach and teach that the Word of God was man's authority, not the church. This man, a great man, became bitter and sarcastic in his teaching because of what had been denied him. When he was on his deathbed, for he died a great while before Heloise, being twenty years her senior, he asked that she be permitted to come to see him. The church did the cruelest thing of all—they would not allow her to come. Therefore he penned her a letter. To me it is the most pathetic thing I have ever read. He concludes it with this prayer: "When it pleased Thee, O Lord, and as it pleased Thee, Thou didst join us, and Thou didst separate us. Now, what Thou hast so mercifully begun, mercifully complete; and after separating us in this world, join us together eternally in heaven." And I believe in God's heaven they are together.

John Wesley's story is not told in England; it is told in this country, in Georgia. When John Wesley came as a young missionary to Georgia, the crown had already sent a nobleman out there—I think they wanted to get rid of him at court because he was an insipid fellow, devoid of personality and masculinity. Yet due to the terrible custom of that day, the nobility was entitled to marry the finest, and he had married a woman not only of striking beauty and strong personality, but one who was an outstanding Christian. Then there came

into their colony this fiery young missionary. Again you know the story—they fell in love. And that happens to be John Wesley's love story. He begged her to flee with him and go live among the Indians. She said, "No, John, God has called you to go back to England, and He has called you to do some great service for Him." It was she who sent John Wesley back to England. The night came for his ship to sail; they had to wait for the tide and the wind, and she came down to bid him good–bye. Oh, yes, she held him that night and he held her, but even the worst critics of Wesley say that nothing took place that was wrong. He still begged her to go with him among the Indians and live. The biographer of Wesley says that he came down that gangplank twice, but she sent him back, back to England—to marry the Methodist church. He returned to England a brokenhearted man; yet she had become his inspiration.

It is God who gives this kind of love to believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit. May I say to the young people today: Don't accept anything that is second–rate. Don't take anything but the very best that God has to offer you.

> **Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband [Eph. 5:33].**

"Nevertheless" brings us down to earth with a jolt. This is the practical part about marriage. Oh, how sin has marred this glorious relationship—as it has marred everything else—but this relationship can be yours if you want it to be the best.

Paul brings the reader back to the ordinary routine of Christian living in the home. "Let each love his wife as himself." This shows the kind of husband to whom the wife is to be in subjection. The husband and the wife in the home are to set forth in simplicity the mystery of the coming glory. This is a very practical application of that which is highly idealistic. He brings the romantic into the realm of reality.[1]

[1] J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Epistles (Ephesians)*, electronic ed., vol. 47 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 144–159.