

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 11/17/91
Ephesians 5:25-30 "Straight Talk to Husbands"

Intro: The family ought to be a place where barriers drop, and we enjoy each other.
Eg--Joke about man and woman married 50 years. . . "I suppose you can attribute our marital success to the fact that I have largely lived an outdoor life."
Eg--West Virginia Hillbilly in big city-elevator, "I should have brung my wife."

Last week, we began a mini-series focusing on the family, "God's Blueprint for Family Living." Please turn to Ephesians 5, the passage which will be the basis for our study.

Background for our Study:

Key: Christian homes ought to be different.

Why? Two reasons.

1. Because of the Christian's Identity.

The book of Ephesians teaches us 2 key truths as Christians:

- a. We have resources (Eph 1-3).
- b. We have responsibilities (Eph 4-6).

Because of the Christian's identity, there ought to be a noticeable difference families of Christians with families of non-Christians. What kind of difference? Paul is showing us in Eph 5:22-6:4.

2. Because of the Christian's Influence.

Eph 5:18-21 "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit"

Please notice. The context for this section on family living begins in 5:18.

Key: Only Spirit-filled believers can have proper family relationships.

Q: What kind of relationships should a Christian have when Spirit-filled?

A: V 21--"submitting yourselves to o.a."

Please notice that ALL of us have a mutual responsibility. To do what? "To submit to o.a." How? "In the fear of God (lit. "in the fear of Christ")".

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. It's His Church. You belong to Him. I belong to Him. And what does He expect of us? To submit to each other. To serve each other.

What does that mean practically?

Last week: "How to be a Wife that Pleases God" (5:22-24)

This week: "Straight Talk to Husbands" (5:25-33)

Note: How many verses did Paul take to instruct the wives? 3 And how many are included in the husband's section? From v 25 to v 33, 9 verses. What does that say to us? First, both wives and husbands have responsibilities to fulfill if the home is going to prosper. And secondly, I'm convinced that when husbands fulfill their responsibilities, wives have little problem fulfilling theirs. The husband sets the

pace in the home. And when a Spirit-filled husband does set the pace, his wife and children will find it natural to follow suit.

Last week, we learned that a wife needs to know 3 things if she's going to be a wife that pleases God. Wives you must know. . .

1. Your Responsibility (22 "Submit")
2. God's Reasons (23, based in Creation, based in Redemption)
3. Your Resolve (24)

This week we turn to the Men. Straight Talk to Husbands.

Proposition: According to Ephesians 5:25-30, there are 2 things God has given to every husband.

I. God has given husbands an Exhortation (25a).

What is it?

II. God has given husbands an Explanation (25b-30).

- A. A Husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church (25b-27).
- B. A Husband is to love his wife as he loves himself (28-30).

I. God has given husbands an Exhortation (25a).

What is it? What does God exhort every husband to do?

V 25 "Husbands, love your wives." (repeated twice, in v 28 and v 33)

Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? Husbands love your wives.

Married men here this morning, do you love your wife? Do you? I would venture to say that the majority here would say, "Yes, I love my wife." So why go on with the study?

Challenge: There are lots of husbands who say they love their wives who are NOT fulfilling Eph 5:25. Why not? They don't know what true, Eph 5:22 love is all about.

What does it mean to 'love' your wife?

Illust: Charles Shedd about "honesty", and write down how you feel.

Came home one time after he and his wife had a big fight, and there was a note on the kitchen counter, "Dear Charlie, I hate you. Love Martha."

Key: In English, we have one basic word for love ("I love my dog Barnie, the Cleveland Browns, choc cake, my wife Sherry, and God"--one English word for all). The greek language, which was used in writing the NT, has at least 3 words for love. Permit me to describe them for you. You listen, and try to determine which Paul uses here.

1. Eros = erotic love

In classical greek, this is the most common word for love. The greeks had a love-god named Eros. Eros is sexual love. This type of love is sensual, impulsive, and spontaneous. And this is key. A person exercising eros did so to seek satisfaction wherever it could be found.

Something is missing from eros. What is it? Commitment.

Illust:

Key: The word eros never appears in the NT.

2. Philos = tender affection; the love of friends; friendship love

The noun philos occurs 30 times in the NT (verb phileo 25 times); used to parental love, God's love for His Son; God's love for lost people, but never used to describe human love for God

Jn 11:3 (of Jesus and Lazarus), "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick."

Jn 20:2 (of John) "the other disciple whom Jesus loved"

3. Agape =

The greeks seldom used the word. They didn't understand it. Yet with the coming of Jesus Christ, the word exploded in usage. Guess where? In the NT. Agape is the main word for love in the NT (137 times as a verb, and 116 times as a noun; sometimes translated "charity").

What is agape?

Jn 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave"

Rom 5:8 "But God commended His love for us. . ."

What is agape love? Though it may involve feeling, feelings are the by-product, not the cause.

Agape = the commitment to do what's good and right for another person

Illust:

Agape love is to love as God loves. Agape love is 3 things--selfless, sacrificial, and serving.

Q: Which word does Paul use in Eph 5:25--eros, phileo, agapao?

A: Obviously, agapao.

Husbands, love your wives in a manner that is totally selfless, sacrificial, and serving. Husbands, love your wives in a way that resembles the way God loves you. Husbands love your wives with a commitment to always do what's right towards them.

Objection: "But I don't feel anything for my wife. We're not compatible. I just don't love her anymore."

Wait a minute! Since when did God say that marriage is based on "feeling" or being "compatible". The world says that. Not God.

Listen. Marriage is based on this key responsibility of husbands. Husbands, you must agapao your wife. You can do that regardless of how you "feel" initially. But I must warn you, once you practice agape love, the feelings will come!

Illust:

There's the exhortation. Husbands, love your wives.

Q: Husbands, do you love your wife?

Practical Illust:

Tran: God has given every husband 2 things in Eph 5. First and exhortation. Now let's look at the second thing.

II. God has given husbands an Explanation (25b-30).

How are husbands to love their wives? What standard are we to follow? Paul explains that clearly for the men in vv 25b-30. God's Word gives us 2 explanations.

A. A Husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church (25b-27).

V 25 "Husbands, love your wives EVEN AS Christ loved the church. . ."

This is a great "Christology" passage. In fact, as you read it and notice the many truths this text teaches us about the Person and work of Jesus Christ, you may wonder if Paul has lost his train of thought. You may wonder, "Paul, I thought you were talking about family relationships in this passage. Why are you spending so much time talking about the doctrine of Christ?"

And Paul would reply, "I'm not rambling. I've not lost my train of thought. I want you to know that one of the greatest reasons to keep the marriage relationship pure is because of what it illustrates.

Husbands, you must love you wife just like Christ loved the Church.

Q: How does Christ prove that He loves the Church?

A: With action! Paul lists 5 action verbs in vv 25-27. Christ is the subject of each. Each shows us how Christ demonstrated His love for His bride.

1. Christ "loved" His bride (25).
2. Christ "gave Himself" for His bride (25).
3. Christ "sanctifies" His bride (26).
4. Christ "cleanses" His bride (26).
5. Christ "presents" His bride (27).

What a beautiful statement! So complete. So comprehensive. It describes Christ's care for His church, from eternity past to eternity future. Notice 5 progressive stages involved in Christ's love for His church.

1. Christ "loved" His bride (25).

When did Christ love His bride? Did you realize that the Son of God loved His Church even before He created her, in eternity past?!

See:

But that's not all. Agape love demands action. What did Christ do?

2. Christ "gave Himself" for His bride (25).

The word "himself" in v 25 is emphatic (lit. "Christ loved the church, and HIMSELF He gave for it."). Agape love is the giving of oneself, just as Christ did. When? At Calvary.

See: John 10:15, 17

That's true love. True love makes sacrifices, self-sacrifices. That's what Christ did. He took our place. He became our substitute (Rom 5:8).

Illust: Hymn "Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

Q: But why did Christ do it? What was the purpose of His sacrifice?

A: Vv 26-27 "that. . . that. . . that"

3. Christ "sanctifies" His bride (26).

To "sanctify" means "to set apart for a particular use". Christ loved His bride, and gave Himself for His bride. Those are past tense. But what is He doing for her now? He has "set her apart". That's why Christians are in the world, but not of the world. We belong to our Bridegroom. We long for His return.

How did Christ "set us apart"?

4. Christ "cleanses" His bride (26).

The tenses of the verbs are specific. The cleansing preceded the sanctifying. That is, Christ desires to "sanctify" His bride because He already has "cleansed" His bride.

How did He cleanse us?

v 26 "With (or "by") the washing of the water by the Word"

To what is that referring? See: Tit 3:5 "Not by works. . . but by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Christ cleansed us when He gave us new birth. That transformation is symbolized by believer's baptism.

But there's one more step involved in the complete love of Christ.

5. Christ "presents" His bride (27).

V 27 "That He might present her. . ."

Christ's objective is to make us holy and pure, just like He is! And some day, what will He do? "Present us to Himself a GLORIOUS Church."

Right now on the earth, the church is often stained and ugly, her garments tattered and soiled. But one day, she will be seen for Who She is, the Bride of Christ, decked in the radiant righteousness of her Redeemer!

Christ did all this for His Bride! Please observe that the bride does not make herself presentable. The Bridegroom labored in love to beautiful her! His sacrifice, His service, His alone made it possible.

Illust:

Note: It strikes me that Jesus Christ relates to His bride with purpose. He devotes Himself to do something for the good of His bride. He gave Himself. Why? To sanctify His bride, to cleanse His bride, so that in that great day He might present His bride as the beautiful finished product He designed!

Q: Men, do you relate to your wives with purpose? What purpose?

Illust:

Tran: How are husbands to love. First explanation--As Christ loved. . . Secondly.

B. A Husband is to love his wife as he loves himself (28-30).

V 28 "So ought men {"husbands" in v 25} to love their wives as their own bodies."

At first, reason #2 is anticlimactic. After taking us to such heights as the love of Christ for His Bride in vv 25-27, you may wonder why now Paul would list such a mundane reason. The reason is that Paul was a realist.

He knows that no husband will ever grasp fully the greatness of the love of Christ. Why not? 3:19 says Christ's love "passes knowledge". So in case the first explanation overwhelms you husbands, here's the second.

V 28 "Love your wife as you love yourself."

"ought"--Husbands, we have an obligation, not an option (present tense).

Ought to what? Love. . . as you love your own body.

Q: How do you love your own body?

A: V 29 "nourish and cherish it"

Some husbands work out 2-3 times a week. Why? To take care of their own body. Some men work 60-70 hours a week. Why? "If I don't look out for myself, no one will."

Men, we know how to look out for ourselves. That comes natural. What God's Word is saying is this, "Learn how to look after the needs of our wives with the same drive, the same devotion, the same dedication.

Problem: One of the greatest needs of a woman is security. Yet many men are guilty of ignoring that need in their wives.

Objection: "Why I do things that show my wife I love her. I bring home a paycheck. I put a roof over our heads. What more could anyone want?"

You mean, "What more could YOU want as a man?"

Listen. Just because you're meeting YOUR needs, doesn't mean you are meeting your wife's needs. Perhaps what your wife needs most from you is not some THING. What she needs most, and what she's crying out most for is YOU!

Q: Do you schedule into your weekly routine TIME for your wife? (and kids)

Illust: Patrick Morley in his book, "The Man in the Mirror", challenges men to try this experiment. For the next 30 days, do this. Stay at the kitchen table for 20 minutes every day after dinner. Let the kids go play. Just you and your wife. To do what? Talk! Communicate. Get to be best friends!

Illust:

Challenge: We need husbands who will accept the exhortation--Love your wife!

Agapao your wife. Be selfless, and sacrificial, and serving towards your wife. Secondly, we need husbands who will follow the explanations! Love your wife as Christ loves His bride! And love your wife as you love yourself.

Assignment: Rate yourself. . .

As a husband, I am. . .

I. Selfless:

- basically selfless
- more selfless than selfish
- more selfish than selfless
- basically selfish

II. Sacrificial:

- basically sacrificial
- more sacrificial than egotistical
- more egotistical than sacrificial
- basically egotistical

III. Serving:

- basically one who sees and meets needs
- one who meets needs more than demanding his own needs be met
- one who demands his own needs be met more than meeting needs
- basically one who demands his own needs be met