



Month of the Family



Love and Respect... The Man's Role

Ephesians 5:25-33 – February 15, 2009

Introduction: Last week we looked at the woman's role in the marriage. In a word it was "Respect"! Men it is our turn this week. One word: "Love"! We are to love our wives. How do we do that? What does it look like? When is it hard for a man to really love his wife?

Divorce stats: (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006)

- There were 2.3 million marriages and 1.2 million divorces in 2005. Almost 20 million Americans—about 9.9% of the U.S. population—are currently divorced.
- People marrying today have a 50% chance of divorcing.
- Statistically, 40% of first marriages, 60% of second, and 73% of third marriages end in divorce.
- About 75% of those who divorce will eventually remarry.

BARNA STATISTICS: In 2000 –

21% of atheists and agnostics will or have experienced divorce.

29% of Baptists

34% of Non-Denominational

If 50% of our cars (Ford, etc) fell completely apart in the first 2 years of operation, these companies would be forced to do something drastic in making changes to fix the problem. Why aren't we taking drastic steps to fix the institution of marriage?

Transition: As we get started let's clarify a few assumptions

1. Gentlemen... a godly wife is a precious gift!

Proverbs 18:22 – He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD. (NIV)

- Favor - “acceptance, goodwill, or approval.”
- **Not: The ideal... An ordeal... Looking for a New Deal!?**

2. God is the one who gave her to you!

Proverbs 19:14 – Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

I. Love and Cherish: A Husband’s Responsibility. (v.25-33)

A. The Command: “Husbands love your wives”...

4 Kinds of Love

1. **Eros**: It is that sensual and sexual love...

Makes your palms sweat, affectionate love, and the kind that makes your heart go pitter-pat romantic kind of love; your heart skips a beat... But if you are married there ought to be some romance in your marriage... There ought to be some time for you to cuddle and tell her how she makes you feel... How you’ve been waiting for this moment all day... Sometimes the hustle and bustle of life will cause you not to feel romantic...

2. **Phileos**: Where we get the word Philadelphia. It is a friendship kind of love... sometimes friends leave you...!

3. **Surgase**: Family love... Those with biological connection to you... But Paul’s not talking about that kind of love either, because if the truth be told, you’ve got some family that, if it were up to you, you wouldn’t claim them... You’ve got some cousins that when they show up, you want to just run and hide... But because they’re biologically tied to you, you put up with them...

4. **Agape**: A self sacrificing love. A love that looks beyond your faults and sees my needs... *Hosea 3:1 “Go, show your love to your wife.”* It seeks the highest good. It has the idea of unreserved, selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional.

B. The Culture of His Day

1. His thinking was radical because marriage under **Jewish Law**:

- Women were seen as things... as possessions
- Women were servants. When a Jewish man would get up and pray in the morning, “God I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman”. (MacArthur, p.16-17)
- They had no legal rights
- Husbands could divorce them for any reason (Deut. 24:1)
- Wife had no rights to initiate divorce

2. In Greek Society:

- The wife lived in total seclusion; Lived in women’s apartments
- Never appeared in the street alone or in the market place
- Never ate with her husband
- She was in complete servitude
- But the husband could go anywhere, with anyone for any reason

Summary: All the privileges belonged to the husband and all the duties to the wife. (Barclay)

C. The Characteristics: How do we love that way?

Paul says that he shows submission to his wife by loving her, just like a woman shows submission to her husband by respecting him!

The emphasis is not his dominating authority but is endearing accountability. Not his demands for respect, but his desire to love.

We are commanded to do the very thing that doesn’t come natural to us. We would rather lead than love, lord it over than serve, and demand allegiance than give deference! Not with tyranny but tenderness.

1. **SACRIFICIAL** (v. 25)

²⁵*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*

- Rom. 5:8 Jesus didn't wait for his bride to say I love you first, or respond. He took the initiative.
- **Gave:** Greek word meaning *surrender*... John 10:11; Gal. 1:4
- This is a command not because she is attractive or worthy, but because it is His will. Sometimes we love in spite of not because. The command is not predicated on her reciprocal response. *A husband is not commanded to love his wife because of what she is or is not. He is commanded to love her because it is God's will for him to love her!* ^(MacArthur)
- Jesus washed His disciples' feet because He loved them and sought to serve them, not because they deserved even that most menial of services. He loved them despite their selfishness, pride, ambition, self-indulgence, jealousy, and fickleness. ^(MacArthur)
- Jacob loved Rachel sacrificially...14 years he worked for her!
- I Cor. 13:5 *True love doesn't seek its own*
- Phil. 2:7 *emptied himself taking on the form of a bondservant.*
- Gal 2:20 *Crucified with Christ!* Don't ever marry a man who is not willing to die for you. Because a man who's not willing to die for you is a man who is not worthy of you...
- **Sacrificial Compromise:** Marriage is when you agree to spend the rest of your life sleeping in a room that's too warm, beside someone who's sleeping in a room that's too cold.
- When is the last time I made a sacrifice for my wife?

2. **SANCTIFYING** (v. 26-27)

²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

- *Sanctify*: To *set apart*: there is a mystical purifying going on. We have a divine obligation to bring our mates into conformity to Christ. We have to lead by example. James 1:27 *unstained from the world*
- *Cleansed/Washed by the word*: In ancient Greece, a bride-to-be would be taken down to a river to be bathed and ceremonially cleansed from every defilement of her past life. Whatever her life had been before, it was now symbolically purified and she would enter the marriage without any moral or social blemish—the past was washed away. (MacArthur, p300)
- The betrothal ceremony in Judaism also came to be called “the sanctification of the bride,” setting her apart for her husband (Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Eph 5:26). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press)
- John 17:17 *The word of God sanctifies.*
- Is. 1:18 *though your sins are like scarlet, they will be like wool.*
- Understand that when you sanctify her, you’re doing it in the expectation not of what she IS, but what she WILL BE! None of us are perfect! But thank God that when He looks at us, He’s not looking at us based on where we are now... But He looks at us based on what we shall be...!
- *Having no spot or wrinkle*
- *The church today is not perfect; it has spots and wrinkles. Spots are caused by defilement on the outside, while wrinkles are caused by decay on the inside.* Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary.*

- Your unconditional love for your wife mysteriously brings out the best in her. Not just physically but in every dimension. You can affect her spiritual life. Be a spiritual leader in your home.

- Is your relationship becoming more Christ-like?

3. **SUSTAINING** (v. 28-29)

²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

- *As their own bodies*: they are like an extension of us; we wouldn't do anything to cause a self inflicted injury!
- “*nourishes*”: to feed; used primarily in reference to raising children. Provide for her needs. Some feel that this is a reference that the man should be the financial provider for the home.
- “*cherish*”: to soften by use of body heat, to keep warm as a bird covers its young with its feathers (Deut. 22:6). Tenderly love her and show her affection.

- How are you cherishing your wife?

4. **SUPPORTIVE** (v. 31)

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” CF. Gen. 2:24

- *Leave (kataleipo)*: intense form which means to abandon completely, Was even harder in his day when the families often lived in a more communal fashion.
- *Cleave (proskollao)*: join; To cling to, or adhere to, abide fast, cleave fast together, be joined together, keep fast, stick to.
- NT: cement together - to stick like glue - or to be welded together so that the two cannot be separated without damage to both.

- Illustration blue and pink heart. The husband and wife relationship could also be compared to two pieces of paper that are glued together. If you try to separate two such pieces of paper you tear them both. If you try to separate husband and wife, both are hurt.
- *One Flesh*: unity both sexually and in every way!

5. **SYMBOLIC**

³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

- We are the earthly representation of how Christ views us as the church!
- Then marriage relationship is a tangible illustration of how God treats us the Bride. We look to his example on how to behave ourselves!

II. Men have a hard time loving their wives when...

A. They feel they are being **disrespected**

1. Most women don't do this intentionally
2. *Prov. 12.4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones.*

B. They don't feel **trusted**

- Decisions are constantly being challenged and questioned. Guys, are you insecure?
- Fear by wife is misdiagnosed as lack of trust (ex. *Me driving in Mexico-safety*)
- Women give unsolicited advice.

C. Wives are controlling and **critical**

- They "usurp" authority
- *Ruth Graham: "My job is to love Billy; God's job is to change him"*
- Nagging: Like being nibbled to death by a duck.

D. Their leadership is **rejected**

- Partial follower ship (“*in everything*” v. 24). Not just in the decisions we like.
 - Inconsistent submission
 - We don’t see the “emotional side” of a “woman’s logic”
- E. Wives and kids “**gang up**” on dad
- She sides with kids instead of him; kids are use as leverage
 - Kids play us like a violin; They divide and conquer: ex. strict vs. easy
 - Kids are her priority, not the marriage; kid-centered vs. a spouse-centered marriage
 - Quote: Let the wife make the husband glad to come home; and let him make her sorry to see him leave.
Martin Luther

In Thornton Wilder’s play, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, the character Mrs. Antrobus says to her husband, "I didn't marry you because you were perfect. I married you because you gave me a promise." She takes off her ring and looks at it. "That promise made up for your faults and the promise I gave you made up for mine. Two imperfect people got married, and it was the promise that made the marriage.

PP Picture: “The Covenant”...Prayer

Table Talk

1. How did Christ sacrifice for the church?
2. How does the Bible’s concept of submission run counter to our culture’s view?
3. Why is love so important to a woman?
4. What are some practical ways we can “sacrifice” for our wives?
5. How do you “sanctify” your wife? What does that mean?
6. Are there other areas of your relationship that make it hard for you to either love her or respect him?
7. What do you think about the concept of unconditional love and unconditional respect?
8. What is shaping your expectations in your marriage? Are you being influenced by our culture or God’s Word?