

The Loving Husband – Eph 5:25-33a

Introduction – On either Lord's-Day side of this all-encompassing election, let us remember what is really important when it comes to transforming the culture through the gospel of Jesus Christ for the long term. We have recently addressed the worship service, which is central, and the importance of seeing our children as a part of that central activity. When God grants us a true awakening and reformation, one of the cultural areas that will be most notably affected will be the recovery of the biblical familial roles of husband and wife. In the meantime, we preach Christ and His role towards and with the church to the world around us through our Christian marriages.

Love, Love, Love – Wives are never commanded particularly to love their husbands in the Bible. Titus 2:4 is no exception, for the word-phrase there is to be lovers-of-husbands, affectionate toward their man, or “into husbands.” On the other hand, husbands are commanded four times in Eph 5:25ff to love their wives.

As Christ Loved the Church (Eph 5:25) – Men often say they aren't into “love,” but the thing they are against is the sentimental, sticky-sweet and effeminate thing the world calls love. That is not at all the love God is commanding. This love is as manly as Christ giving Himself on the cross. This love has masculine characteristics. This love rescues and saves its lover, makes war on its enemies, and wins the battle. A man who does not love his wife is an emasculated man; he accomplishes nothing.

How Does Love Work? (Eph 5:26-27) – The husband's love changes the wife when he is reflecting the love of Christ for His church. It makes her lovelier, and the husband knows this is the case. His work is from a godly jealousy and a godly selfishness. He knows that she is his crown; she is for him (Prov 12:4a). Christ loved us when we were not His lovely bride; He loved us and made us His lovely bride (1 John 4:19, Rom 5:8). This is true not only of our justification but of our ongoing sanctification; and so it is to be with husbands towards their wives. Love serves the object of one's love, imitating Christ (1 Cor 13:4-7). Simply put, the mark of a man who loves his wife is a lovely wife.

A Holy, Selfish Love (Eph 5:28-31) – A man should expect nothing but weeds if he does not tend to his own garden and he should expect nothing but problems if he does not care for his own body. But a man naturally loves his own body; his attention is immediate when he is cold, hungry, or in pain. How many times a day does a man love his own body? He is to have that kind of “selfish” attention to his wife and it comes with this promise: “...he who loves his wife loves himself.” Therefore, when a husband complains that there is no love left in his marriage, it is primarily his fault. On the other hand, when a husband loves his wife in this way he will find that it is impossible to out-love her.

Nourish and Cherish – This is what the Lord does for the church and this is what the husband imitates as he serves His wife. Remember, Christ was made head of all things for the sake of the church (Eph 1:22-23), “which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

What Does This Look Like in Your Home? – These are the commands of God for husbands. You will notice that there are not immediate specifics of application. This is because it must first be a demeanor, a heart-attitude, a settled conviction, and a knee-bent submission to the Lord. This is why we make the vows we make at the altar before God and witnesses. After that, we spend our lives figuring out how to love this particular woman with her particular personality, desires, and needs. But certain things should be clear to all.

Royal Honor (1 Pet 3:7) “An excellent wife is the crown of her husband” (Prov 12:4a). There should be well developed etiquette and manners that reflect this truth all the time in his home, and out of his home. His children should also learn from his example and teaching that this woman particularly deserves special honor and respect.

Monogamous Love – Like Christ, the husband is focused on one wife, one bride and for the long-haul. (Prov 5:15-19). Lust and adultery are, of course, excluded. But so is the sin of comparison, for this only reveals that his discontent mind is on other women. Finally, it is certain the love of a husband to his wife should be above his love to all other human relations. She is his bride, she is his sister, she is his companion. No one else should come close. His monogamous love must be emotional, relational, and sexual, focused upon her needs and desires.

Two Illusions – One common temptation for husbands (and wives) is to think that nothing can change because he doesn't have any feelings for her anymore. But, considering all we have discussed, this is simply due to the fact that his heart is where his treasure is and his treasure has been long away from her. Changing this requires the obedient activity of “putting off” and “putting on.” He must put off his lusts and distractions and he must put on the robe of a husband. There is no place for waiting for the feelings to come.

The second illusion, on the opposite end of the spectrum is for a husband to think that “things aren't really that bad.” If she thinks the marriage is falling apart and he thinks things are basically fine there is at least a huge communication problem to be addressed.

Finally – The work of loving your wife is something you will never perfect. In addition, she will change and so will you. But the grace which abounds in Christ as He loves His church is yours for your marriage; therefore it is never too late, you are never too far gone. Even when things are going well, there is still far more to explore and discover about and with your wife. Go and love her for the rest of your life. “*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*”