

Series Title / The Blessed Life
A study through the letter to the Ephesians
1-27-18 Love and Respect Pt 2

A Call to Live the Blessed Life (Chapters 4-6)

To say that Paul has now turned sharply and decisively to practical matters in Ephesians is an understatement.

The Main Idea: Spirit-filled marriages are possible when men take the lead in loving their wives the way Christ loved the Church.

Last Week...

1. Spirit-filled marriage and family (5:21-33).

- submission is common and contextual (5:21). Paul has already prescribed mutual submission as the very ethic of Christian Community. But that submission is contextual. Not every context or situation demands the same degree of submission (If I'm speaking on Sunday vs. helping you plan your wedding).
- wives submit to the Lord through respect and deference to the husband's authority (5:23-24). **We learned that submission is not...**
 - Blind servitude or slavish subordination.
 - Subjugation—the men are not to seek to subjugate and demand submission or service from the wife.
 - Source or origin.
 - **It means a voluntary deference to the authority, will, or preferences of another.**

This week, we'll zoom in on Paul's instructions to the men. Now remember, we said that this was a **patrilineal kinship** model of marriage and family. Meaning, the **lineage** is determined by the male heirs and the bloodline of the Father can only be passed on from Father to Son—while the siblings (brothers and sisters) shared a strong relationship and bond—the daughters only useful purpose (in that world) was to **marry them off for social make social alliances.**

To illustrate the mindset towards women and wives in the ancient world...

Demosthenes (a Greek statesman and orator from 4th century Greece) **wrote**, “we have prostitutes for our pleasure, we have concubines for daily cohabitation, and wives for the purpose of bearing children and managing the household.” You can see the utilitarian function of wives...

In the ancient world the marriage bond was **merely contractual, and rarely sentimental** or involved emotional love and affection. Women were little less than chattel, and children fared even worse.

Scholar Kent Hughes stated, “Paul's radical call to marital love was a bare-knuckled swing at the domestic ethics of his time—much as it is today.”

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Another Pauline passage that will help us to understand Paul's mindset, in a redemptive context...

Galatians 3:26 "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith...There is neither **Jew nor Greek** (ethnicity), there is neither slave nor free (social status), there is neither male nor female (gender)—for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise." **With this passage in Galatians Paul the Apostle flattens the earth.**

When it comes to being considered members of the family, Abraham's true heirs, we are the descendants of faith, the household of God the Father, co-heirs with God the Son.

But equal value and worth in a redemptive context does not obliterate the inherent social responsibilities and roles that God has for us. But Paul says "Women, you have responsibilities, but also the privileges of sonship in Abraham. Men, you have privileges, but you also have responsibilities."

Let's take a moment and look at the full passage again...

Eph. 5:19-32 "speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving **thanks to God the Father** for each other in the **name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, ²¹ and **submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ**. ²² Wives, [submit] to your husbands **as to the Lord**, ²³ because the husband is the **head of the wife** as also Christ is the **head of the church**—he himself being the savior of the body. ²⁴ **But as the church submits to Christ**, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church **and gave himself for her** ²⁶ to sanctify her by cleansing her with the washing of the water by the word, ²⁷ so that he may present the church to himself as glorious—not having a stain or wrinkle, or any such blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In the same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one has ever hated his own body but he feeds it and takes care of it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.** ³² This mystery is great—but I am actually speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each one of you must also love his own wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

The last line, vs. 33, is Paul's summary of the entire paragraph. What it means for men to emulate Christ in the marriage is for him to love and cherish his wife with a selfless and singular affection; and what it means for wives to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord is for them to show him respect, to esteem his position in the home as well as his responsibilities.

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First, our love looks like Jesus' when...

- **husbands submit to the Lord through sacrificial love for the wife (5:25).** “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave (*paradidomi*) himself for her.”

What characterizes this “giving” love?

- **God gave his best**—“For God so loved the world that he gave *his one and only Son*” (John 3:16). The word *paradidomi* means “to entrust or to commend oneself.”

The extravagance of the gift is in proportional to the value of the recipient.

Now, I hope you don't think that just because you are a recipient of God's grace that you don't have value or worth. It's true that there is nothing inherently in me to make me worthy of his gift of salvation. But my value is determined by my creator and my redeemer.

- **Value is determined by the God who is our creator and redeemer**—Eph. 2:10 “For we are God's creative handiwork, his craftsmanship (*poema*)” you are the crowning achievement, the showpiece, the centerpiece of God's creative endeavors. And as such you are his beautiful work of art—and your marriage was intended to be that way also.

Illus. Let me ask you—what determines the value of art? The artist who paints and creates the piece, and the buyer—It's worth is whatever the buyer is willing to pay. And the price for our redemption—was the best, the costliest amount—his one and only Son. Don't think for one second that because there is nothing inherently in you that warrants God's grace that you are not worthy of that Grace because God says: “This is your value—this is your true worth to me.” And he demonstrates how much he loves us and cherishes us by the price he was willing to pay to redeem us.

- **Husbands: I know this can be difficult with demanding work schedules, but when we give our spouses the best of us, we are demonstrating to them their value and worth to us.** Conversely, when we fail to give them choice moments, quality time, attention and care—we are essentially telling them that they don't matter. And if by marginalizing and ignoring them we constantly tell them that they don't matter—well then we shouldn't be surprised if they up and quit on the relationship one day.

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- **Christ gave Himself.** Phil. 2:5-7 “⁵ Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men” Now, it would be wrong to interpret this as Christ abandoning his divine nature for a human nature. The doctrine of the incarnation is that Christ was truly God and Man, both natures fused together in the same person—Jesus of Nazareth. **What did Christ empty himself of? Not his nature or his divine position—but his divine prerogatives.** Choosing to give up the perks of his divine power and instead became the servant of all. The path to greatness is not demanding our authority and the position of our rights—but the path of self-less service.
 - **Husbands: Our wives, children, families**—they don’t just want our stuff: Paychecks, vacations and material things. They want us—an emotional and time investment. To be present. Giving our very selves the way Christ gave himself for his people.
*“Husbands, **love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.”***

Next, our love looks like Jesus’ when...

- **husbands submit to the Lord through sanctifying love for the wife (5:26-27)** “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ²⁶ to sanctify her by cleansing her with the washing of the water by the word, ²⁷ so that he may present the church to himself as glorious—not having a stain or wrinkle, or any such blemish, but holy and blameless.”
 - Sanctify here means to “set apart, to consecrate, to hallow.” To make something holy is to set it apart for a special purpose or to make something proprietary.
 - “Cleansing her with the washing of the water by the word” is a cultic analogy.
 - **Ephesian festival to Artemis, the false fertility goddess of Ephesus** (Artemis of the Ephesians)—a pornographic city-wide orgy and sex festival. In addition to the many unmentionable practices surrounding this festival to the false goddess Artemis, the central ritual of defiling her and her temple virgins, and then carting the statue down to the wharf and washing her to cleanse her of the many and multiple lewd acts—she was then carted back up to her temple where she was said to have been sanctified and cleansed for another year—pure and ready.
 - **So, Paul draws from the familiar imagery of washing and ritual purity**—but completely upends this Ephesian nonsense. The implication cuts both ways: men, do not allow your wives to participate in such an event. Keep her from getting drawn into this perverse ritual. But men, do not engage in this perverted festival which will actually defile your relationship.

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- **Husbands—the application here is clear.** Do not allow anything into your marriage bed, your fantasy life, or to capture your emotions such as an emotional affair. Do not allow anyone to break or to intrude on this sacred covenant. Allow nothing that would capture your fantasies, your emotions, your affections or your time. Keep this relationship sanctified, set apart as special—undefiled.

Husbands, our love for our wives should emulate Christ's sacrificial, giving (**His best and His very self**) love for the church.

Husbands, our love for our wives should **sanctify**, make holy, and consecrate our wives with a singular and exceptional devotion.

Lastly, our love looks like Jesus' when...

- **husbands submit to the Lord through sustaining love for the wife (5:28-33)** "In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰ since we are members of His body."

Notice that Paul takes this issue of the two becoming one flesh, one life, one person very seriously. There is a deep and mysterious bond between husband and wife—a spiritual union that is difficult to describe.

The husband takes care of his wife as if she is his own body. We are to love others *as we love ourselves* in general—but this is nowhere more needed than in the husband and wife bond.

Illus. I have a friend who thought he was the picture of health until he had a massive heart attack that almost took his life. Now, in his late 60's, he carefully watches his diet, makes sure to get regular checkups on his cholesterol, takes his meds and his Lipitor, and treats his body with loving care—so that he can be around for his family and children. Exercise is the order of the day.

In the same way we are to care for our wives with a sustaining nourishing love. Does the home environment nourish her affections or is it toxic with abusive language?

- Does the home environment you've created free your wife, and liberate her from the bondage of blind servitude—or are you a control freak?
- Does the home environment you're creating exercise the passions of her heart? Or are you clogging the pathways of her passion for you?

This is a mystery because marriage is supposed to be a living analogy of Christ's selfless and tender love for the church and the church's respectful submission to the Lord.

Now this is a great mystery—because it is such a great analogy of faith.

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Now, men, let me give you practical advice—where to from Paul’s lofty picture of love and respect.

1.) Get these books

a. ***Love and Respect* by Dr. Emerson and Sarah Eggerichs (Ephesians 5)**



b. ***The Meaning of Marriage* by Tim Keller (Biblical Perspective)**



c. ***His Needs, Her Needs* by Dr. Willard Harley (Practical Guide)**



2.) Get into the Word. Resist the cult of leisure. God has given us everything for our enjoyment including sports, hobbies, the outdoors—he has put everything in the garden for our enjoyment. But he calls us to say no to the cult of leisure and self-gratification that is in the world. To a life of disciplining ourselves to have the mind of Christ—and we cannot have the mind of Christ if we do not read his Word.

3.) Get some Coaching/Peer Review. This year we are going to recruit, train and deploy a marriage coaching team to help married couples on that spectrum I just gave you. Bob and Jean are a gift to us. The Marriage Teams Ministry is going to put on a training for us—I hope you sign up, and I hope you can contribute.

- a. **Marriage coaching**
- b. **Marriage and Family Seminars/Workshops**
- c. **Marriage and Family Small Groups**
- d. **Marriage Classes**