

Standing For Marriage

STAND

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Bible Text: Ephesians 5:21-33

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Thank you for that song this morning.

Ephesians chapter five.

We are glad you are here this morning to worship the Lord with us. We are going to stand for marriage this morning. Standing for marriage is the title of our message today.

Sometimes I listen to old fashioned radio from the 50s, old radio dramas. I think they are interesting, the stories from back then like *Lone Ranger* and things like that and the old radio dramas. And I was listening to one recently and they had these old commercials in between. And I like to hear the old commercials. Here is one of the commercials on... or advertisements on the radio from 1958.

CBS radio. Here is what it said, something to this effect. "The world is full of war, violence. The youth are troubled. Many juvenile delinquents are running around today. What can I do in this world of trouble?" The ad continued to say, "Do your part to not raise a delinquent child. Go to church." That was the advertisement. It said, "Go to church to help not raise a delinquent child. And go to the church of your choice and worship together and give to your church and your church will be able to help those in need. Be involved in a local church of worship."

I haven't heard too many advertisements like that today. But it sounds like a good idea, doesn't it? Take your family to church. Don't neglect something that God has given to you here today to be in church. I am glad you are here with us this morning. God has a plan for your family. God has a plan for your life and it is his desire that you come together with the people of God each week and it will help your home and it will help your family and it will help your life and you will glorify God. And you will do a good thing for the Lord by being faithful to him.

In Genesis chapter two the Bible says God called their name Adam. So we know how God formed Eve out of the side of man and he brought man, Adam and wife, Eve, together and in that verse God called their name Adam. Perhaps you wonder. Where did the tradition come from of a woman taking her husband's name and it comes right from

Genesis chapter five verse two. And ever since God performed that wedding ceremony in the Garden of Eden, ever since then a woman has taken her man's name. That is in Genesis five two.

Now here we are in Ephesians chapter five speaking about marriage. The Lord teaches about marriage and displays and models marriage for us in the same way that God loves the Church and that Christ loves the Church.

We will begin reading in verse 21 of Ephesians chapter five. Notice how it begins:

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”¹

Now all of this is based upon verse 18 that where:

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”²

If you want a successful marriage each day you will yield to the Holy Spirit of God. It is all based upon that. So there is some mutual submission in verse 21. Verse 22:

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. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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. 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. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.³

The Lord teaches about marriage in this passage and displays what marriage should be like, like the bride and Christ, like Christ and his bride, the Church.

Folks, if men would love their wives like Christ loves the Church and, ladies, if you would revere your husbands like the biblical Church reveres Christ, many homes would change for the better.

¹ Ephesians 5:21.

² Ephesians 5:18.

³ Ephesians 5:22-33.

As I do premarital counseling and I do a lot of counseling, premarital, postmarital, I try to do the premarital counseling before you get married. Make sure you get everything as best as you can ready before you go into the marriage, because that is a lot better than post marital counseling. And there is always hope, by the way. If you are involved, or you need postmarital counseling, there is always hope. Most families, though, most husbands and wives wait six years too late to start counseling. That is the average. It is usually there is a problem they wait six years before they get real help trying to get the things corrected and solved.

So I do a lot of counseling and I encourage people, here is one of the things I talk about in premarital counseling, communication, commitment and contentment. Those three Cs really will go a long way in your home if you would communicate with your spouse, if you would be committed to your spouse and if you would be content with the spouse that God has given to you. You can see how life and family changing that could be.

There is a married couple who had a quarrel and ended up giving each other the silent treatment. I hope you don't do that. Two days into their mute argument the man realized he needed his wife's help. In order to catch a flight to Chicago for a business meeting he had to get up at 5 AM. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence, he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me up at 5 AM."

The next day the man woke up to discover his wife was already out of bed. It was 9 AM. His flight had long since departed and he was about to find his wife and demand an answer to her failing to wake him up, but he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. And it read, "It is 5 AM. Wake up."

I hope that you don't live like that. God has something better for you in your marriage and in your life.

Being a member of a church is a privilege, not a right. Being married is a privilege and not a right. Sir, she did not have to say yes to you. Lady, you did not have to say yes to him. Marriage is a privilege. It is not a right.

With this perspective in mind, let's consider this message standing for marriage. A lot of people say, "Well, I am going to stand for marriage. I will protest something. I will picket something. I will try to get legislation passed." And they will say, "I am going to stand for marriage."

Listen. The best way a person can stand for marriage is to have a good one. That is the best way. We need to model what it is to have a good marriage. That is the best way to stand for marriage. And to work on a marriage and marriage takes work. Marriage is a commitment for life.

Now no matter what your background is or what your marital status is here this morning, maybe you have been married for a while. Maybe you are thinking about getting married.

Maybe you have been married and divorced and remarried, whatever the situation is, the Bible has some solutions and some help for everybody here this morning and I hope that you will accept it and receive it to the glory of our God.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we do thank you thank you for your Word today. This lesson and this message in Ephesians about marriage, Lord, help us to take it to heart. Help each family in our church today all of those married, all of those thinking of being married, all of those, perhaps, formerly married. Lord, do a work in our lives here this morning. We commit the next few moments to you and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Marriage is a commitment for life. you have heard me say this. One man and one woman for one life. Marriage is a commitment for life. It is a life commitment. It is a life altering commitment this thing called marriage. Let's observe some marriage patterns in the Bible. In Genesis we have the first wedding, if you would. The first marriage is Adam and Eve. And if you would read through the first few chapters in Genesis you would learn about Adam and Eve and their relationship and you would see how God brought them together. And we have the first example, the first model, the first demonstration of one plus one equaling one. I know that the math doesn't add up, but that is what happens. God said, "I am bringing you two together and you are becoming one."

And so one plus one equals one. Marriage makes one.

Listen to Genesis 2:24:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."⁴

So you have two coming together to be one. And we learn from Adam and Eve the importance of unity. God brought them together and united them together. And just as Eve was formed with Adam, Christianity, the Church is formed by Jesus Christ. And so our pattern can be found and established here in Ephesians five. We see how the example is. Here is Christ loving his Church, his bride. And he is bringing them and us to himself. And so we find unity. I hope that you have a pattern in your life like Adam and Eve, one of unity, intense unity in you home.

A second example in Genesis would be Isaac and Rebecca. We learn from Isaac and Rebecca willingness. In Genesis chapter 22 Abraham is told by God to go give a sacrifice. And we find that Isaac willingly follows Abraham. He looks at all of the equipment and things that they have as they are going up on the mountain. He says, "I see the wood. I know we have a fire. We have the sacrifice. We have all the materials for an offering, for a sacrifice to give to God, but we don't have the sacrifice. We have everything we need, but we don't have the sacrifice." And they get to the top. Abraham is

⁴ Genesis 2:24.

about to offer his son and Isaac willingly is there on the altar. He was willingly there on that day.

Folks, if we are going to have a marriage that honors God, we want to follow this pattern, one of willingness. We find in Genesis chapter 24, a couple of chapters later, that Isaac is again waiting on and waiting with his father Abraham. Abraham then sends an unnamed servant—perhaps his name is Eleazer—we don't know his name, but he goes and he finds a bride and he brings back Rebecca and here it is a man who is waiting for his bride to be brought to him. He was waiting, but he was willing to wait. You see, these two, Rebecca and Isaac, they are yielding to the leading of God. They are yielding to the provision of God. And they were willing to wait upon the Lord.

Before a man will give himself to his wife, he should give himself to God. Before a woman is going not give herself to a man she must yield herself to God. The beginning of Ephesians five where we read we must yield to the Spirit of God to walk in the Spirit of God that is where marriage is successful is that we are yielding to the Spirit of God not to our flesh, not to our ones, not to our agendas, but to the agenda of God, to the Spirit, the leading of God.

Adam and Eve we find unity. In Isaac and Rebecca we find a willingness to wait upon the Lord. And we should have that same willingness. How about Joseph and Asenath? Perhaps you are not familiar with her name. She marries Joseph in Genesis chapter 41 verse 45 the Bible says:

“And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.”⁵

Here we find sharing. Here is a woman who was a priest's daughter. We would never have known her name. We never would have known anything about her, but here she is a lonely person elevated to second in the kingdom with her husband being second in the kingdom of Joseph. And we find sharing is an important part of marriage as well. And I wonder if she traveled with him and went around with him as he would go and lead there in Egypt.

So we have Adam and Eve for unity, Isaac and Rebecca we find willingness, and Joseph and Asenath in sharing. How about Christ and the Church, the greatest example of Christ and the Church? We find the same unity and willingness and sharing in the model of his love. We read the verses there in Ephesians chapter five. That is our primary example. These are some patterns for marriage.

How about problems in marriage? Dr. Bob Jones said this. He said, “Duty never conflicts.” You know, I believe that is a true statement, but there are times when you don't know what to do. There are times where I am not sure what to do about this marriage situation, this scenario that is unfolding in our lives.

⁵ Genesis 41:45.

1 Peter 4:8. You might want to write this verse down, 1 Peter 4:8.

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”⁶

What should I do if there is a problem in my marriage? Love. Charity covers a multitude of sins.

We are going to talk about anger and abuse and adultery this morning. And these are problems that marriages confront. How about anger? Maybe about the man. Let’s consider Proverbs 22:24. The Bible says:

“Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go.”⁷

Wait a minute. I am married to a furious man and the Bible says I shouldn’t even make friendship with a furious man. What should I do? That is a tough place, isn’t it? That seems like there is a conflict there. Love covers a multitude of sins. What should I do? My man, he goes on pairs and he is outrageous at times and he sometimes he demands respect, but he is not respectable. I would classify that man as an egomaniac. He is feeding the flesh. I want you to feed my flesh. I want you to do what I want and if you are not I am going to tear things up. I am going to be angry. I am going to be mad. All of these times a furious man, a man of rage. What do you do if a man, a husband is like that?

What about a woman? Is that just a man’s problem? Primarily or most of the time it would seem, but Proverbs 21:9 says:

“It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.”⁸

It can go both ways. What do I do? I am in a marriage, the relationship. God brought us together. I believe that. But one or the other is full of rage and anger and wrath and it is just contention all of the time. Well, it is only by pride comes contention. If that man would submit to the yielding and the leading of God, if that woman would submit to the yielding and the leading of the Holy Spirit, it would change that family.

How about abuse? How about abuse? In 1 Samuel 19:10 here is a story, an example. I believe that. That is significant and helpful if one is enduring abuse. And, by the way, if somebody is angry all the time, sometimes that leads into physical abuse. Like a father who disciplines his son or a daughter in anger sometimes they abuse their child because they are trying to do things right, but they are not doing it the right way, because they are

⁶ 1 Peter 4:8.

⁷ Proverbs 22:24.

⁸ Proverbs 21:9.

in anger. And you can hurt somebody. So anger many times will lead to abuse. So what do I do? I feel threatened. I feel like I am under threat here. What can I do? Abuse.

1 Samuel 19:10.

“And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul’s presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.”⁹

When you think about the intensity of that moment when David was standing there and it sounds like he was against the wall and have you ever thrown a baseball? You kind of get into that. You kind of throw that. Have you ever thrown a javelin? Not many of us are javelin throwers, but that takes standing up. That takes effort. It is pretty cool and to be able to do that there is a lot of effort. Now David ducked and Saul misses and David does not stay around to see what happens. David is gone. Out of the way from bodily harm and bodily injury. The Bible emphasizes the same story quite a few times. Saul did that on a few occasions.

And so what about abuse? I find that story amazing because in biblical times in the days of David and King Saul, loyalty to a king was almost more loyal than marriage was. Many of these people defied God’s command for one man and one woman. Some of them had multiple marriages and pluralistic relationships and they had many wives, some of them. But they only ever at one time had one king. Only ever at one time did anyone have one king. And David got out of there and was away from the potential harm and danger. David avoided being injured or killed by Saul.

What about abuse? Well, turn over to 1 Corinthians, if you would. We will look at a few other passages in 1 Corinthians, also in Matthew. 1 Corinthians chapter seven. If there is threats of harm and there is bodily injury potential, abuse, I can understand getting away from that. Now you notice, I didn’t say anything about divorce. I said something about getting away from that. Separation can be a good thing.

1 Corinthians chapter seven. Look at what the Bible says in verse 10.

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.¹⁰

That put away word, that phrase has to do with divorce. Don’t let him put away his wife.

So what about abuse? What about anger? These are tough questions. These are scenarios that play out in many people’s lives.

⁹ 1 Samuel 19:10.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.

How about adultery? Turn over to Matthew five. What should I do? Marriage problems. Remember charity shall cover a multitude of sins. Matthew chapter five verse 31. Notice the Bible says:

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.¹¹

He continues to teach that let your yea be yea and your nay be nay, just if you say something like to death do us part, that you really mean it.

This passage is not an endorsement of divorce. This passage is telling us the consequences on further sin that can happen after divorce. That is what God is teaching us in this passage. It is not an endorsement of divorce, but a recognition of further sin that can be caused by a divorce.

Now turn over to Matthew 19. We will begin reading in verse three. Jesus is being confronted about some teaching that priests have taught for years. And it is about marriage and divorce and marriage and so let's look at what Jesus said, Matthew 19 beginning in verse three.

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.¹²

A key phrase in that passage is from the beginning. From the beginning it was not so. What is God's intention and God's best for your life? It was not so. Divorce is not God's best.

¹¹ Matthew 5:31-32.

¹² Matthew 19:3-9.

In Hosea chapter there verse three. I will read the example to you. Hosea has a wife and his wife's name is Gomer and Gomer runs away and runs with other men, multiple men. She has multiple affairs and just a terrible person, you would say. And Hosea 3:3:

“And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.”¹³

After his heart is torn out, after his heart is broke, after their relationship is damaged he says, “I want you back and you are mine and I am yours.” That is what Hosea says.

Just recently I read an article in the news the Tiger Woods has proposed to his wife again. And do you know what? That is a good thing. Infidelity, all the things that we are aware of in the news, he asked forgiveness. He seems contrite and real about it and he got down on his knee again and said to his former wife, “Will you marry me?” That is a good thing and I admire what he is doing with that. I think it is a good thing.

What about adultery? What should I do? What about anger? What should I do? What about abuse? Charity, love, shall cover the multitude of sins. Have that person back. If it is a dangerous situation stay away until they get the dangerous situation settled. I would never recommend divorce for anyone. Based upon the Word of God I would never recommend divorce for anyone.

Well, you don't know what I am going through.

I understand that. It is tough. It is difficult. You see, there is a greater problem than anger. There is a greater problem than abuse and there is a greater problem than adultery and here is what it is. It is a person, a husband or a wife, or both not yielding to the Holy Spirit of God. That is the bigger problem. I am not yielding to the Spirit of God. I am yielding to my flesh or I am yielding to myself. I am not yielding to God. That is the bigger problem.

So go back to Ephesians as we continue our message, Ephesians chapter five. One or both are going to the flesh and not to the Spirit of God. Sometimes couples need to separate for things to cool down or to calm down. And I understand that, but I would to recommend divorce. Divorce is not God's best. From the beginning it was not so. That is the answer.

Well, what is the problem? We read about what... and Jesus' answer there in Matthew? Why do we have hardness? It is hardness of heart? Why do we have difficulty like that? It is hardness of heart. It is yielding to myself and to my flesh rather than the Spirit of God. Jesus said in answer to he question, “Why did Moses allow it?” It was because of the hardness of your heart.

Divorce is not God's best for marriage. Look in Ephesians 5:18. What does this all have to do with?

¹³ Hosea 3:3.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”¹⁴

That is the answer. Men, that is the answer. Ladies, that is the answer. In any marriage if you want a successful marriage yield every day to the Spirit of God. Lord, I want to love my wife like you love my wife, like you love the Church and gave yourself for it. I want to follow that model. I want to follow that example. And, ladies, I want to yield to the Spirit of God and to follow my husband and to support my husband and to help him and to be the lady, to be the woman that God wants me to be. And we have to die to self to do that and yield to the Spirit of God. The answer is in this passage in Ephesians, verse 18.

So then we must have some plans. Now no matter what your marital status or what your background or history is, marriage is worth it and anything worthwhile requires work. And so here are three things that you must have in your marriage, three things you must have in your marriage if you want it to work, if you want to follow the Spirit of God. These are things that God gives us in these verses.

Verse 21 we learn of mutual submission. Can you say that word or that phrase with me? Mutual submission. What is the first thing we need? Everyone. Mutual submission. It will go a long way in your marriage relationship. Verse 21:

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”¹⁵

I like what one commentator said. He said that God created the woman second giving Eve a subordinate, not subservient position in relation to the man. Adam was made to be ruled from his head. Eve was made to be ruled from her heart, but Satan persuaded Adam and Eve to change roles. Eve took the lead and the place of headship. Satan cleverly aimed the temptation at Eve’s mind and engaged her in an intellectual discussion on whether or not she should do something that God had expressly forbidden. The result was that when ... that she was deceived. When Adam was approached Satan withdrew and allowed Eve to tempt him, thus aiming the temptation at Adam’s emotions, his heart. The Bible says that Adam was to be deceived, he disobeyed. That is a really good observation of what happened in the Garden of Eden.

Now there is a place here for mutual submission. It doesn’t mean somebody is more important than the other or values are different or anything, but our roles, our position are different.

Verse 22 tells the wife is to submit to her own husband. Look at what it says.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Ephesians 5:18.

¹⁵ Ephesians 5:21.

¹⁶ Ephesians 5:22.

It is amazing when you look at this word for husband it is the word $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\rho$ (an'-ayr). It means man. It is translated man, not husband in other passages. So it means husband. It also means man and Paul is telling it and God is telling that, ladies, you know, you listen to your man. This is your man. There is some ownership connected to that. This is your man.

But notice how the submission and this yielding is to take place, as unto the Lord. This elevates it from right here and now to a spiritual plain. I am going to be in the home and have this type of submission as unto the Lord. This elevates it into a spiritual plain.

Now how can we... you know what is the authority of that? Well, it is the worship of Christ. That is part of the example. Like Christ loved the Church, gave himself for it, the lordship of Christ, the headship of man. God gave the man to be the head in that relationship. Is anyone more important than the other? No. Are we talking about a man just domineering and pushing people around and do it my way or the highway?

No. That is not what submission is talking about here. And you can be an idiot if you want to, men, but that is not what it is talking about. You can hurt your wife if you want to, but that is not loving your wife. That is not what this mutual submission and this wife submit to your own husband has to do with. A lot of men have done the wrong things with them. You know, do it my way and just angry and, you know, just because I am the husband and that is why. And there are a lot of fools running around and people preach it the wrong way as well. Hard, hard, unkind. No, that is not what it is teaching. That is not... ladies, that is not the submission that we are talking about. You know, he is trying to get me to do something wrong. He is treating me wrong. I am going to submit to this? Watch out for that. Watch out.

How about this? Each for the other, both for the Lord. That is what we find in verse 21.

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”¹⁷

Each have their roles, both are valuable to God, mutual submission. Listen. Sir, you need to find ways to serve your wife. How can I make things easier for you today? How can I help you with what is going on today? Mutual submission. Think about it in terms of service. Ladies, how can I help you today? Husband, how can I serve you? How can I make things good for you today? Mutual submission. Not I want it this way and I need it that way and you are going to do it this way and I am just going to be all irate about this. No, that is not what we are talking about. How can I serve you and make your life better? That is the submission we are talking about, to serve one another. It is all before God.

Now we need not only mutual submission we need unrelenting love. Look in verse 25.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Ephesians 5:21.

Selfless, self sacrificing, giving love. That is what we are to have. Men are called out in particular for this unrelenting love. And I think about Romans 8:39 where the Bible says nothing shall separate us from the love of God.

Well, you don't know what she did? You don't know how they acted. You don't know the situation. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God. Man, keep loving your wife. Don't let anything hinder that. Keep loving your spouse. Don't let anything get in the way. Like Christ loved in the Church, nothing shall separate us from the love of God.

An unrelenting love. Can you say that with me? Unrelenting love. Don't let go of it.

There was a lady in Spain who made the news a few years ago. She chose a unique way to test her husband's love. With the help of a friend she manipulated her own kidnapping and sent a ransom note to her husband. When the police discovered the kidnapping was a hoax they asked the lady why she did it. She said, "I wanted to find out what my husband would do for me."

Ladies, don't do something like that. Prove my love. Prove your love to me. Come on. Show it.

Men, she shouldn't guess or wonder or it be left to conjecture whether she... whether you love her or what lengths or depths you would go to show and demonstrate that love. She should know that already. And you need to demonstrate that.

What should we do then with this unrelenting love? Forgiving and being focused on good. Folks, marriage is made of two imperfect people becoming one. We need to be forgiving. We need to be focused on good. The natural man looks at what is wrong. My spouse did this. And my spouse did that and I can't stand it when they keep doing this other thing. You can fill in the blank with whatever you want to. And you can say focus on something that is negative and something that is wrong. That is the natural man. That is not the Spirit of God. That this the natural man. It is a normal thing for you if you are following the flesh to be nit picking, to look on the negative things. But when Christ sees the Church he sees a forgiven bride, a bride that he is preparing for himself.

And look in verse 25.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church.¹⁹

He is looking at you and the Church as a glorious Church. That is what he is looking at. And not with spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:21.

¹⁹ Ephesians 5:25-27.

Well, we see every blemish of our spouse. And if you get nit picky and start focusing on the negative it is going to hurt your marriage. It is going to hurt your relationship. It is going to hurt your life. We need to be a forgiving people. We need to be a people focused on good.

Well, he didn't ask forgiveness. She didn't ask forgiveness. That is all right. When Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it he said:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."²⁰

And people weren't knelt down begging forgiveness when he said that. They were actually crucifying him when he said that.

So we need to be a forgiving people. Titus 1:15 says:

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."²¹

This love of Christ, this unrelenting love is our example, forgiving and focused on good. How about caring and cherishing graciously? The Bible says that here in Ephesians five that the man is supposed to cherish, cherish his wife. We need to care for our spouse. Men, you are to be a loving leader. You need to be a listening leader. Listen to your wife. Listen to her counsel. Listen to what she is saying. Every day have discussions, communicate. Men are to be loving leaders. Men are to be listening leaders. Men are to be the providers. Men are to be the guiders. Men, you need to stand up and provide even if you don't provide the Bible says a man who doesn't provide for his own is worse than... he has denied the faith. He is worse than an infidel. You need to be a provider and a guider and, men, get this this morning. Nothing is too good for your wife. You need to invest in your wife, get her the things that she needs and give her the best at your money can afford. I didn't say the best that money can buy, because we don't have that. But you need the best that your money can buy and get that for your wife and be a giving person to your spouse.

This is the type of love that Christ demonstrated, an unrelenting love, a mutual submission. And the third part this, unwavering commitment. Can you say that with me? Unwavering commitment. There is nothing going to stop me from being committed to my spouse and to my spouse alone.

Look in verse 31.

"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."²²

²⁰ Luke 23:34.

²¹ Titus 1:15.

²² Ephesians 5:31.

There is a great unity there, isn't there? Great unity, an unwavering commitment. Two are become one. They are together. One man and one woman and one life.

How about to be an uplifting person, an unwavering commitment to unity, an unwavering commitment to be an uplifting person, uplifting in verse 33.

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”²³

The word reverence means to put on a pedestal. Ladies, the person that you should get excited about the most isn't some other man. It is your husband. That is the person that you should get excited about the most. Put him on a pedestal to be a cheerleader.

Years ago when Natalie and I were married I just asked her to do at least one thing, to be a cheer leader. I needed someone to be a cheer leader. That is what this word has to do with, someone who says, you know, encore and cheers you on and you can do this, to be a cheer leader. Put her man on a pedestal.

Ladies, that is what the Bible is describing for you to do in an unwavering commitment to unity and to uplifting the other.

Another commentator said this in conclusion. Husbands are to love their wives. It is in your bulletin as well. Husbands are to love their wives just as much and in the same way that they love themselves. No summary could be shorter, wise or plainer. Nearly all domestic friction and unhappiness would be unlikely to resist a husband who loved her as he loved himself. If the husband goes on to love her as Christ loved the Church, so much the better. Paul had a parting word for the wife, too. Reverence your husband. The wife is to put her husband on a pedestal, make much of him, admire him, speak well of him and defer to him. That is a real good concluding statement at the end of Ephesians five.

This is a life changing message today if you would yield to the Spirit of God. That is where the answer lies. Marriage is successful when two people come together under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and continue to live under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. And that makes a successful marriage.

Yield to the Lord today. Maybe you say, “I have made some mistakes or I have sinned or I am I sin now concerning marriage or my relationship. Or maybe I am going to get married one day and I know I need to take these things to heart.” Talk to the Lord. If confession is needed, make confession today. If you need to get right with God with some of these things, do that. If you need to get right with your spouse, by all means do that.

In the invitation time let's make sure that we are yielding to the Spirit of God in our marriage relationships. May God help us with this. Marriage is a commitment for life.

²³ Ephesians 5:33.

Let's bow our heads for...