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Husbands: Love Your Wives by Looking to Christ; Ephesians 5:25-33

GPBC

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Introduction – Last week we learned about true, biblical, godly love from 1 Cor 13. The world has its own definition and practice of love, but its only a counterfeit, deceptive, destructive, selfish kind of love. Since God is love as found in 1 John, the true meaning and practice of love does not come from the world, or from self, but rather from the very character of God.

As we learned about true love in 1 Cor 13, our prayer is that we as God's people would resist allowing the world to influence our understanding of love and pursue love toward one another in the same way God loves us. Let 1 Cor 13:4-8 be our guide as to how we are to love.

In the same way, our passage today in Ephesians 5 is specifically directed to husbands. God is calling all of us as men to love our wives in a way that is totally different and foreign in the world. Whether you are married, engaged to be married, or hope one day to marry, God is calling us to a deeper, more meaningful, gospel-empowered kind of love.

The world around us has tragically and drastically distorted how we as men are to think of women and treat women. It's a counterfeit, shallow, superficial, selfish love. In a culture inundated in pornography and so-called sexual freedom, women are viewed as objects rather than daughters of God. And when you add our own self-absorbed nature to the mix, a distorted view of women leads to a distorted view of love, which results in a very dysfunctional marriage. Men, if we are trained by the world, we don't know how to love. We know how to lust. That comes naturally from our sin nature. But to love our wives in a way that draws her closer to God and makes us better men, that comes from God. That kind of love must be learned and pursued and practiced over and over again.

- I. Christ's Love is Sacrificial and Sanctifying (vv25-27)
 - a. Notice that God commands us to love our wives. In other words, what we often think is love isn't because its not God's way of love. And to not love our wives with a God-centered love is not an option because remember love never ends. So we ought to be constantly

giving attention to loving our wives. When God addresses husbands directly, the first command He gives is to love our wives.

- i. Take time men to date your wife. Say special things and do special things to express to her and reassure her that you love her. We should leave no doubt in her mind that she is first in our heart right after Christ.
- b. But how are we to love our wives? In what way? “as Christ loved the church”. Now we see clearly that we are not talking about worldly love at all, but rather a holy love. We are to pattern our love for our wives after Christ’s love for the church. Our relationship with our wives should mirror Christ’s relationship with His people.
- c. So how does Christ love the church? “gave himself up for her” The love that Christ has for His people is our model for the love we are to have for our wives. Men, we simply need to ask this question – how does Christ love me? And then we begin to learn how to best love her.
 - i. It’s a sacrificial love. Phil 2:5-8.
 - ii. Christ willingly laid aside His rights, what He deserved. He gave Himself to be our servant. He put Himself in our place. He humbled Himself. He obeyed the Father. Ultimately, He yielded up His life.
 - iii. He gave up everything in order to save us – greater love has no man than this – and that’s why we as His people will praise Him forevermore.
 - iv. Consequently men if we would love our wives this way, she won’t have any difficulty supporting us and following us when she knows her best interest and spiritual good is our main objective.
- d. Now there’s all kinds of ways that we can make daily sacrifices to demonstrate our love. Setting aside our plans if needed, taking the time to listen and talk, valuing and learning from her input, going out of our way to do something special – all of those things are wonderful expressions and we should practice them. But that’s not exactly reaching the goal of this text, is it?
- e. The reason Christ loved His church sacrificially was for the purpose of sanctifying her. In other words, Christ’s love for us makes us more like Christ. Vv26-27

- f. Men, hear what God is teaching us today. We are to sacrificially love our wives in such ways that she is becoming more like Christ, that she is growing in the Lord, that she is trusting in God more, that she is loving Jesus with greater and greater affection. The way we live and the way we love should be bolstering her faith and encouraging her walk. According to this passage, there is no better way to love her.
 - g. How can we adjust our schedules, priorities, routines, attitudes, and conversations so that we make it easy for her to pursue the Lord? And desire to pursue the Lord?
 - i. What can we do to make sure she is actively attending and participating in church? How can we encourage and help her in spending time with the Lord daily? How often should we pray with her? When she's struggling, we should be there to listen and understand and bring the promises and truths of Scripture to light so that she sees time and time again God is faithful and His grace is sufficient.
 - h. Men, we need to start every day with 1 Cor 13 – what love is and end every day with Ephesians 5 – how to love our wives – and pray throughout the day for God to help us put into practice what we read, to pour His love into our hearts, to change us to be more and love more like Him.
 - i. Men, we'll know we're on the right track and loving her well when we see her growing in the Lord!
 - j. That means before we can ever love our wives as Christ loves the church, we have to be men of God. III. Sat night.
- II. Christ's Love Provides and Protects His Body (vv28-30)
- a. We are to love our wives as we love our own bodies because that's how Christ loves the church. The church is the body of Christ. And Christ nourishes and cherishes His body.
 - i. Christ not only saves us for heaven, but He dwells with us. He never leaves us or forsakes us. He intercedes to the Father on our behalf. He strengthens our faith. He sustains us. He keeps us. He protects us from the enemy. He provides us with daily bread and daily grace. He not only has gone to prepare a place for us, He is making sure we get there.

- b. Husbands, we are to love our wives the same way. When we marry, the two become one. She is our body now, so love her as Christ loves His body.
 - c. When we don't love our wives, we're only hurting ourselves because she is now one with us and we are one with her. So here's the point, the more we nourish and cherish her, the better we become.
 - i. You see with the Lord it's always the opposite of the world. You don't get better by how much you get – you become better by how much you give.
 - d. Listen to these words from Isaiah 43:4. This is God speaking to His people. "You are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you." That's it men. That's how Christ loves the church; that's how we love our wives.
- III. Husbands Portray Christ in the Marriage (vv31-33)
- a. You see men marriage is more than a social contract. Marriage is a gospel institution. When the world defines marriage it loses the very nature and purpose for it. The meaning of marriage is found in the gospel.
 - b. V31 – leave his father and mother – just like Christ left His Father's side in glory – and hold fast to his wife – just as Christ holds fast to us so that no one can snatch us away – and the two shall become one flesh – just as we are united to Christ in His death and resurrection.
 - c. V32 - Marriage is a living picture of the gospel, and husbands portray Christ. And wives portray the church.
 - d. V33 – how you do that
 - e. Does your marriage need to be renewed, rekindled? Build it on the gospel, reflect Christ and the church. Do you want your young, new marriage to be the best it can possibly be? Build it on the gospel, reflect Christ and the church.

Conclusion – wives – do you respond to your husband as the church is to respond to Christ, attitude, words, actions? Are your thoughts and reactions toward him in line with what our thoughts should be toward Christ? Men – young and single men, engaged men, newlywed men, married men – do we look like Christ or do we look like the world? Do we love like Christ or do we love like the world?