

## Harmony at my House (Part 2)

### *The Spirit-filled Husband*

**Text:** Ephesians 5:25-33

#### **Introduction:**

1. In Vs. 18, we have the command to “be filled with the Spirit”. The Apostle then proceeds to demonstrate the fruit that flows out of a Spirit-filled, Word-filled life.
2. The Spirit-filled life produces:
  - Harmony in God’s House (Eph. 5:19-21)
  - Harmony at My House (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
  - Harmony at the Work House (Eph. 6:5-9)
3. Family life as God ordained it works! The kind of family life described in these verses is only a possibility for those who are:
  - Saved – “in Christ” (Chp. 1-3).
  - Spirit-filled (5:18).
4. The truths relating to Christ and His church are interwoven throughout the exhortations to husbands and wives, revealing God’s grand and glorious purpose in ordaining marriage that it might be a picture and reflection of Christ’s relationship to His church. To tamper with God’s institution of marriage is a very serious thing!
5. Observe that while there are 3 verses dealing with the wife’s responsibility in the marriage union, there are 9 verses dealing with the husband’s responsibility!
6. In this message we will consider what God’s Word has to say about the Spirit-filled husband in the home under 5 headings.

#### **I. THE EXHORTATION (VS. 25A)**

##### **A. The Definition of this Love – ‘love’**

1. The word ‘love’ is the key work in this section, appearing 6 times. “It refers to love irrespective of merit even to the underserving. The present imperative reinforces the idea that a husband’s love for his wife is to be an ongoing process. The intent in this love is to seek the highest good in the one loved.” (Hoehner) “This is a self-sacrificial love, a love that impels the one loving to give himself in self-sacrifice for the well-being of the one who is loved.” (Wuest) It is the love that God is (1 Jn. 4:8), that God showed at Calvary (Jn. 3:16), and the love that the Holy Spirit produces in the heart of the yielded believer (Gal. 5:22).
2. This love cannot be manufactured. It has to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). “Our little tributaries of love soon dry up, but the ocean tides of His immeasurable love come in and overflow the banks of the narrow channels of our love.” (Phillips)
3. It is an action more than an emotion. Emotions accompany love and bring warmth to a relationship but true love is not dependent upon emotions. It is a choice.

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4. A convicting exercise for a husband is to turn to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and examine his love for his wife against the standard of God's Divine love. Try it! "As a husband I suffer long and am kind and I do not envy. I do not vaunt myself or am puffed up. I do not behave myself unseemly nor am I self-seeking. I am not easily provoked and I don't think evil of my wife (meaning I trust her and put the best construction on things). In my marriage I don't rejoice in iniquity but I rejoice in the truth. In relation to my wife, I bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things. My love for my wife never fails."
5. Note: This teaching was revolutionary in Paul's day when marriage was broken down much like it is today in our licentious society. Demosthenes (Greek Orator) said, "We have courtesans (prostitutes) for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs." Seneca, a Roman Philosopher, said that the women of that day would date the years by the names of their husbands.

### **B. The Direction of this Love – "your wives"**

1. Your focus of this love is to be your wife. While you should have Christian love for your sisters in Christ, only your wife should be the special attention of your affections.
2. Note: The words "husband" and "wife" in this verse are often translated "man" and "woman" elsewhere in the New Testament. To be a husband, you must be a male and to be a wife you must be a female! These words are always gender specific in the New Testament. The word translated 'husband' never refers to a woman and the word translated 'wife' never refers to a man.

## **II. THE ILLUSTRATION (VS. 25B-27)**

The example of Christ's love forms the great standard of love the husband is to aim for with the filling and help of the Spirit of God. The Apostle presents the purpose or goal of Christ's love for the church with the three 'that' clauses. Observe the qualities of Christ's love in these verses.

Christ's love is:

### **A. A Sacrificing Love (Vs. 25b)**

1. "gave himself" = Christ's love was a love that was demonstrated in action. Love took Christ to the cross for His church. Christ was not forced to die but laid down his life willingly and voluntarily for the church (note the word 'himself').
2. As husbands we should love our wives to the point of being willing to die for them if the situation ever arose.
3. Illustration: A striking story is told about the wife of one of Cyrus' generals who was charged with treachery against the king. She was called before him and after trial condemned to die. Her husband, hearing the awful news, came running in and threw himself prostrate before the king and said, "O Sir, take my life instead of hers. Let me die in her place!" Cyrus was so touched he said, "Love like that must not be spoiled by death," and he gave them back to

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each other and let the wife go free. As they walked happily away the husband said, "Did you notice how kindly the king looked upon us when he gave you a free pardon?" "I had no eyes for the kind" she said; "I saw only the man who was willing to die for me."

4. As husbands we need to learn to give or ourselves daily for our wives. Husbands can be shockingly selfish and self-centred, always ready to take from the wife but barely willing to give.
  - a. Do you give any time to your wife? Or does it all go to your work and hobbies?
  - b. Do you have a servant's attitude in the home?

### B. A Sanctifying Love (Vs. 26-27)

The grand purposes behind Christ's dying for the church are unveiled. Christ's love had the ultimate good of the church in view. "Christ's love for the church is presented here in three majestic movements extending from the past to the present to the future." (Macdonald) Christ's love is the source and fountain head for all these unspeakable blessings.

1. Our Past Redemption – "gave himself" (Vs. 25)
2. Our Present Sanctification – "That he might sanctify and cleanse it" (Vs. 26)
  - a. 'sanctify' = to be set apart or consecrated to God. Positionally the church is already sanctified but practically she is being set apart day by day as she goes through the sanctification process. Illustration: Esther's one year of preparation before being presented to King Ahasuerus (Est. 2:12-16).
  - b. 'cleanse' = the moral purification of the church.
  - c. 'washing' = the word refer to a bath or bathing place.
  - d. "by the Word" = The primary instrument of sanctification God uses is the Word of God. John 17:17 "**Sanctify** them through thy **truth: thy word is truth.**"
  - e. Challenge: Do you contribute to the spiritual needs of your marriage and family as a husband? Are you a man of the Word, able to help your wife in Christian growth and development?
3. Our Future Glorification – "That he might present it"
  - a. The church will be flawless – "not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing". She won't even have the slightest imperfection. She will be perfect in glorious, radiant beauty before the throne of God as the Lamb's bride.
  - b. The church will be faultless – "holy and without blemish". "Without blemish" means faultless, unblameable, free from faultiness.

## III. THE APPLICATION (VS. 28-30)

"From this illustration of Christ's all-encompassing love for the church, Paul applies the truths to these husbands who read this letter... Christ's sacrificial love is to illustrate the necessary depth of love husbands should demonstrate toward their wives. If Christ could love sacrificially those who hated him, should not husbands love their wives who do not have such animosity?" (Hoehner)

### A. The Responsibility (Vs. 28a-29a)

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1. The husband is to love his wife as himself. There is a natural instinct within each of us to give care and attention to our own bodies. The husband is to give careful consideration to the needs of his wife as he would to his own body. Paul uses two words “from the language of the nursery that are charged with affection.” (Hoehner)
  - a. ‘nourisheth’ = same word translated “bring them up” in Eph. 6:4. It means to bring up from childhood, rear up. It means to nurture and the thought encompasses the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of a person.
  - b. ‘cherisheth’ = literally means “to heat”. It means to comfort, cherish and warm. The same word used in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 where Paul states that he was gentle among the believers as a “nurse cherisheth her children.”
  - c. John Phillips: “Just as a man must take care of his body, a husband must see to his wife’s comfort. He must protect her from harm, desire her wellbeing, and pay close attention to the signals that she sends. She can, after all, make his life blissful or tormenting. He needs to help her develop her potential, nourish her, and cherish her.”
2. “He that loveth his wife loveth himself” = how can loving my wife be equated with loving myself? “The thought is the oneness of husband and wife, the position of the wife as part of the husband’s self.” (Wuest) Husband and wife are welded in marriage into a single unit of which the husband is the head. A man’s wife is a part of him and he is to love her as if she were his very body.
3. Practically speaking
  - a. Make time for your wife. Listen, listen, listen and then listen again! A husband read an article to his wife about how women use 30,000 words a day to a man’s 15,000. The wife replied, “That’s because we have to repeat everything to men.” The husband turned to his wife and said, “What?”
  - b. 1 Pet. 3:7 “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with **them according to knowledge**, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered”
    - i. Study your wife. Know her! It’s a lifelong study.
    - ii. Treat her with care, gentleness and respect. Don’t cut her down with your speech. Speak kind words. Any act of violence or abuse against a wife is unspeakably wicked.
    - iii. Prov. 16:24 “Pleasant words *are* as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”
  - c. Show an interest and concern for her physical needs: 1 Cor. 7:33 “But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” Some men are very good at spending money on themselves but not their wives!

### B. The Representative (Vs. 29b-30)

1. Christ is again brought into view as the supreme example for the husband to follow.

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2. Consider how Christ nurtures and tenderly cares for His body the church. He redeemed it (1:7-12; 2:1-10), sealed it (1:13-14), empowered it (1:19-23), brought it into one body (2:16), filled it with God's fullness (3:19), gifted it (4:7-16), and loved and sanctified it (5:25-26).
3. Phillips: "The Lord views the church as His bride; it is His body. He loves it, nourishes it, and cherishes it. It is precious to Him. Nothing on earth or in Heaven compares with it. He died to redeem it. He watches over it. His Holy Spirit is here to guide it and gladden it. At the Father's right hand, Christ is importunate on the church's behalf. He anticipates with delight the coming day when the church will be complete, when it will be like Him forever, when it will reign with Him over God's vast empires in space. As far as the Lord is concerned, nothing is too good for His beloved. The church is the love of His life, the centre of His thoughts, and the object of his purposes. A man should view his wife in the same way."
4. "for we are members" = the reason why Christ nurtures and takes tender care of the church. We are members of His body!

### IV. THE FOUNDATION (VS. 31-32)

"This verse reinforces the concept that the husband is compelled to love his wife because they are one flesh." (Hoehner) Paul's teaching on marriage, as with Christ's in the Gospels, is founded and rooted in Genesis. A literal understanding of the first chapters in Genesis is absolutely foundational and fundamental to a proper understanding of marriage and all other Bible doctrine.

#### A. The Origin of Christian Marriage (Vs. 31)

1. This verse is a quotation of Genesis 2:24. Christ quoted the same verse in His teaching on marriage (See Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7). Marriage was God's idea! We learn all the fundamentals of Christian marriage in this one verse:
  - a. Marriage is heterosexual – it is the coming together of a **man** and a **woman**. Two individuals of the same gender coming together does **not** equal marriage. To say that marriage is anything other than the union of a man and a woman is to do violence to the very etymology of the word.
    - i. Consider Webster's 1828 definition: The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life.
    - ii. Consider the shift in the modern Oxford dictionary which defines marriage as "The legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship."
    - iii. Illustration: Filling out a government form and all the options that apparently constitute a "family".
  - b. Marriage is monogamous – it is the coming together of **one** man and **one** woman. Together a man and his wife establish a new family unit.
  - c. Marriage is permanent – the two become one. The word 'joined' means to "glue or cement together".

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### **B. The Objective of Christian Marriage (Vs. 32)**

1. A mystery is “something which was hidden in God and which humans could not unravel by their own ingenuity or study but is revealed by God for all believers to understand.” (Hoehner)
2. In the heart of the Eternal God, He intended marriage to be a picture of Christ and the church. This lifts human marriage to the highest possible plane. How this should change our attitude towards our marriage!

## **V. THE SUMMATION (VS. 33)**

The Apostle reviews and summarizes the responsibilities of husband and wife.

### **A. The Husband’s Duty: Love Your Wife (Vs. 33a)**

1. “everyone of you” = note that the application goes to each individual. No one is exempt!
2. “love his wife” = the husbands central duty.

### **B. The Wife’s Duty: Reverence Your Husband (Vs. 33b)**

1. ‘reverance’ = fear. In the context of the husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church this could not be fear in the sense of terror. It means she has reverential awe and respect for her husband.
2. It is reverential admiration for a man who behaves like Christ. It is a reverence that stems from an understanding of God’s created order for the home with the husband being the head.

**Conclusion:** How is your love for your wife? Are you a spiritual leader as a husband? Do you demonstrate your love for your wife in a giving, serving way? Are we reflecting Christ’s relationship with his church in our marriage relationship?