

**Ephesians 5: 28 & 29; “Nourishing & Cherishing Her”, Message # 48 in a series
entitled – “The Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study prepared
by Pastor Paul Rendall for August 9th, 2023.**

The last time that we had a study together I said to you that a loving husband often thinks upon his wife; how precious she is to him. He thinks about how He can lovingly encourage her. He thinks of how he can teach her by his own example, what it means to follow Christ closely. In these verses we are taken a step farther by the apostle Paul. We see here, 1st – That a husband ought to love his own wife as his own body. We see, 2nd – That he should nourish and cherish her flesh, just as the Lord does the church. Let’s delve into these things for a few minutes, praying that we will gain much from these words.

1st – A husband ought to love his own wife as his own body.

“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” In our last study, we looked at the great responsibility which husbands have towards their wives to love them as Christ loved them. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word. In translating this into a practical application to Christian husbands today, this involves praying for her often. It means thinking upon her spiritual welfare often. And learning to give himself to her in the thousand situations where he leads her and guides her, together with himself, into the truth of the Bible.

Now, in this verse, we see that Paul is making this love, of a husband for his wife, very practical. A husband ought to love his own wife as his own body. What will this mean? Well, in Christ’s case it mean that He obeyed God perfectly on His Church’s behalf. And He died on the cross for her sins. Now, we men cannot do either of those things, but we can lay down our life physically for her if the need requires it. I think that I must tell you this story because it is such a good example of the way that Christian husbands ought to think of this phrase – loving your wife as your own body.

I want to relate to you what happened to the great hymn-writer Philip Bliss in relation to his loving his and giving himself for her. I found this information on the Website – History Because Its Here. The night of December 29, 1876, Philip Paul Bliss and his wife Lucy Young Bliss were aboard Pacific Express Train No. 5, which chugged westward over the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railway on the way to Chicago. They had left their two young sons, George, 4, and Philip, 1, with Philip’s mother and sister in Rome, Pennsylvania, and were traveling back to their home in Chicago. Philip Paul Bliss had written the words to a new song and placed the song sheet in one of his trunks that rode in the baggage car of the train.

Philip Becomes a Music Teacher and Marries Lucy Young – As he sat beside Lucy on the train seat, staring out into the swirling snowflakes, perhaps Philip thought about the journey had brought him and Lucy to this train ride. He was born in a log cabin in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, in 1838. His father Isaac, a practicing Methodist, taught him to love music and develop his passion for singing. His mother taught him from the Bible, and he had little formal schooling. Philip left home at age 11 to make his own living and worked in timber camps and sawmills. He managed to get an education and earned his teaching certificate in New York. In 1857, he met J.G. Towner who taught singing, and Towner gave Philip his first formal voice training. He eventually became a music teacher and sold his first musical composition for the flute. In 1858, he accepted an appointment at Rome Academy, in Rome, Pennsylvania. While he

worked in Rome, Philip met Lucy J. Young who also came from a musical family and they were married on June 1, 1859.

Philip Writes Songs and Hymns – The Blisses moved to Chicago in 1864, and Philip became known as a singer and teacher. From 1865-1873, he worked with the Root and Cady Musical Publishers, conducting musical conventions, singing schools and concerts. He continued to compose hymns. Over the years, Philip wrote both words and music to hymns like Almost Persuaded, Dare to Be a Daniel, Hallelujah, ‘Tis done!, Hallelujah, What a Saviour!, Hold the Fort, Jesus Loves Even Me, Let the Lower Lights Be Burning, Once for All, The Light of the World Is Jesus, Whosoever Will, and Wonderful Words of Life. He wrote the words for My Redeemer and wrote only the music for I Gave My Life for Thee, It Is Well With My Soul, and Precious Promise.

Philip Joins Dwight L. Moody – In 1869 Philip met Dwight L. Moody and Moody and others urged him to give up his job and become a missionary singer. In 1874, Philip became a full time evangelist and Lucy often accompanied him on tours and rallies. In December 1876, the Bliss family spent the Christmas holidays with Philip’s mother and sister in Pennsylvania, planning to return to Chicago in January. A telegram arrived in December asking him to return sooner to take part in meetings the Sunday after Christmas. He wired Moody a message: “Tickets for Chicago, via Buffalo and Lake Shore Railroad. Baggage checked through. Shall be in Chicago Friday night. God bless you forever.”

The wreck and Philip’s valiant actions – Philip stared out the window. Chicago still lay 350 miles down the track. So far the train trip had been a stormy one. A blizzard had raged all day and piled huge drifts of snow along and across the track. A cold, biting wind blew about forty miles an hour and the inky darkness of the night pressed against the train windows like a velvet cloak. The train consisting of two heavy engines pulling two express cars, two baggage cars, three passenger coaches, one drawing room coach and three sleeping coaches, carried about 160 people. It was running at least two hours late. At about 7:15 p.m. the train slowly approached the trestle bridge that spanned the Ashtabula River about 1,000 feet east from the train station. The iron bridge consisted of two Howe trusses and carried a double track.

The Railroad Trestle Bridge over the Ashtabula River Collapses – The train approached the bridge on the south track. Suddenly, the bridge gave away and one engine, taking a sudden leap forward, rested safely on the western bridge abutment. The other engine, two express cars, and part of the baggage car stood with their weight on the bridge. The rest of the train fell into the ravine 70 feet below. Lanterns, stoves, wooden cars and fierce winds combined to create a devastating fire storm. Philip escaped through the car window, but Lucy was caught in the ironwork of the seats and he struggled to free her. When Philip couldn’t free Lucy, he stayed with her and they died together. Their bodies were never found. Of the 160 passengers, 92 died in the accident which came to be known as the Ashtabula River Railroad Disaster.

Philip’s Trunk Survives the Fire – Philip’s trunk which somehow had survived the blaze reached Chicago safely. It contained many hymn-poems that he had not yet put to music. Inside of it were the lyrics for a gospel song. James McGranahan, a nineteenth century American musician and composer, wrote a tune for the song and Thomas Alva Edison chose it as one of the first songs he recorded. The song is “I Will Sing of My Redeemer.” Memorial services were held all over America for Lucy and Philip Paul Bliss. Their funeral service was held in Rome, Pennsylvania and today a memorial museum is located there.

The reason that I wanted to read this, is to show you how very much Philip Bliss loved his wife. He loved her as his own body. When he saw that she was trapped in the wreckage, he went back in and tried to free her, but couldn’t. And so he decided to stay with her in those last

moments, and they died together in the fire and the wreckage. This was Christlike love. Christlike love in a husband will always cause him to think of what he can do to help his wife physically as well as spiritually. From as simple a thing as holding the door for her, to sympathizing with her in her physical weaknesses and pains; to doing whatever he can do to make her life more pleasant in such times. A husband will provide for his wife, and he will do all that he can physically to protect her and help her in the thousand situations that will come up during their married life.

2nd – A husband ought to do all that he can to nourish and cherish his wife’s person and her flesh.

“No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.” When we think of nourishment we usually think of the foods that we eat and the things that we drink. When we are thoughtful people in this regard we will think of eating a wide variety of nourishing foods, and we will drink those liquids which will help our bodies to be strong and to continue to be strong on a regular basis. This thoughtful consideration of our wife’s physical well-being we will pursue all during our marital relationship as it will affect our children also, and other people around us who are influenced by our perspective on these things.

Again, when a husband is thoughtful about these things, and wanting to be kind to his wife every day, he will talk these matters of eating and drinking, over with his wife, of what would be good for them both in terms of eating and drinking. There are a few verses which pertain to this subject which I want to bring to your attention. 1st Corinthians 10: 1-7 – “Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.” “For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”

“But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.” “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.” “And do not become idolaters as some of them.” “As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’” Now, I want you to see a couple of things from these words. All of the Israelites who came out of Egypt saw the same spiritual/physical blessings bestowed upon them. They all ate of the manna, the bread of angels, the bread of heaven. They all drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them. And that Rock was Christ.

But it says in verse 5, that with most of them God was not well-pleased. Why not? Because most of them did not eat or drink thinking about God, or even how their own example of eating and drinking would affect each other. They only selfishly thought of their own lusts and desires. That is to think only in a worldly way about their food and drink. Indeed, some of them actually became idolaters it says in verse 7. “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” Now, I am trying to show you how a husband does not hate his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church.

A husband ought not to be a glutton or an excessive wine-drinker. And certainly he ought not to be given to hard liquor which might lead him to excess or to drunkenness. A man ought not to hate his own flesh in that way, that he destroys it by excess. Husbands, you ought to ask yourself whether your eating and drinking is a good example for your wife. A worldly man will only be interested in simply satisfying his own appetites for food and drink, and he will not think about his wife or the Lord at all. This is what led the Israelites to have not regard for what was going on up on Mt. Sinai when Moses was receiving the law.

Their only regard was only to eat and to drink and to rise up to play. They became idolators and even led Aaron into the sin of making the golden calf for them. As a result, it says, in verses 5 & 6 that God scattered their bodies in the wilderness because they lusted after evil things. What is the lesson for us in relation to how we ought to be, as a husband, trying to lead our wife into the truth and nourishing her body, soul, and spirit? Well look down at verses 23-31. "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify." "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being." "Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; for 'THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL ITS FULLNESS'." "If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake."

"But if anyone says to you – This was offered to idols, do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for 'THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL ITS FULLNESS'." "Conscience, I say, not your own, but that of the other." "For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?" "But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?" "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." There's the principle – Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being. A man has the liberty to eat meat, asking no questions for conscience sake. And all things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable or helpful. How much more so in marriage.

So whatever you do, whether it is to eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Do you lead the 2 of you in prayer before every meal, men? Look over at 1st Thessalonians 5, verses 14-24 – "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all." "See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all." "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." "Do not quench the Spirit." "Do not despise prophecies." "Test all things; hold fast what is good." "Abstain from every form of evil." "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."

We have been seeing here that all the things that are commanded of all Christians, are especially to be paid attention to, by a husband with his wife. Do you gently warn her if she is unruly? I am not saying that any of us have wives that are unruly. But do you comfort her when she is fainthearted, do you uphold her when she is weak? Are you patient with her at all times? Do you pursue what is good for both of you? Do you rejoice always with her and for her? Do you pray without ceasing together? Do you give thanks with your wife, for all things, knowing that this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus?

Do you think together about the Holy Spirit's being with you both, leading and guiding you into all the truth? Do you try to abstain from every form of evil together? Do you extol the faithfulness of God to you as a couple, knowing that God is able to sanctify you completely? This is what it means to nourish and cherish your wife.