

Marriage Enrichment (5) The Role of The Husband

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Marriage Enrichment

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Let's at least begin with the Scripture reading, that's always a good start, and tonight my focus will be partially on Ephesians 5 and that is the chapter that we all are somewhat familiar with but never too familiar with. So that's the chapter on marriage, so let's read together from Ephesians 5:22 to the end.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
23 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. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 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. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 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.

So shall we together seek the Lord for a blessing on tonight?

Great God, it is thou who has brought us here in safety, in health, and giving us an opportunity with the few of us here to gather, but also with the others who are listening at home. And Lord, we beseech thee that thou will be with us, letting thy Holy Spirit take thy word and put it in our heart, making it not only a part of our understanding but making it a part of our living. And Lord, it is thy design that we tonight, again, may admire as we have in these past sessions, thou created male and female, masculinity and femininity, as help meets to each other. And now tonight, Lord, as we look at another

aspect of this creation ordinance, may it please thee also to help us to see better, more distinctly what are our different roles within the union of marriage. And Lord, and we are never too old to again evaluate in our own marriages and to what extent we are conformed to thy standard. We pray thee for thy Holy Spirit to be with us. Open our minds and open our hearts and make us willing in the day of thy power but also able to rise above our own corruptions and our own fallenness and that through all the brokenness that we have caused in our life through our sins, thou will build thy temple as that glorious body of Christ and his church. And Lord, be mindful of all those who are hindered tonight to be here, some for joyful reasons, some for other reasons that are taking them in work or travel or whatever other reasons they may have to be absent, and bless this also, this message wherever it goes. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now I have a little booklet again for you and so for those at home, if you are desiring to submit a question to me even while I am speaking, you can text it and you, of course, do the same thing if you want to not let anybody know who's asking the question. So if you text me on 920-791-1327. I have to do this correct every time and I do it online so I get the right question on my phone and not on your phone.

Now tonight, I hope that you have gone through your homework, those of you that were here, oops, that the joy in learning is in doing. Now I'm sure I get a little talk with my wife and she says, "What do we do about our homework," but we talk a lot about these things so I am sure that sometimes these things get done almost along the way, right? But it is good to review the things we learn here in your conversations together. That's where you expand, deepen, apply. Welcome tonight and so again, please don't be like that man that goes hunting and doesn't roast what he took in hunting, right? That is a waste. So I always find myself in conferences too where you go there, you invest your time, and then if you do nothing with it, it really kind of fizzles away afterwards.

Now we've looked quite indepth at his and her, the differences between us males and females, and how that can obviously become a tension point, but how really it was meant to be this uniting where we have lacks as males, our females are equipped, where we as females have lacked, our husbands are equipped and it is through this interaction that God meant us to be fulfilled because otherwise we will be not receiving the complementary fulfillment of our spouse.

Now tonight and next week, I mean next time, we'll look at his and her role in marriage. That's a distinctly different subject. And I begin it with a question that became a little bit relevant to me in the last weeks: what is more important, the axle or the wheel bearing to make a wheel turn?

"Neither."

Neither. Okay, now this is a question that came out of a vacation experience. As you might have heard, right, driving with my nice camper from New York into Canada and a wheel bearing got burned out, and that is a handicap on a trip. Gladly it wasn't bad enough that it ground my axle to bits, so I was blessed that it could be repaired relatively

easy, just time consuming. But you know better than I do, I do now, now I never knew anything about wheel bearings until that happened, but I now know that if you turn a wheel at a high speed for a certain length of time, that something's going to happen to the wheel bearing and that is what I did not know. I thought you do that once and that's it, but now I know I have to repack the wheel bearings regularly, right? Re-grease them. That's an easy job, not expensive, but if you neglect to grease the wheel bearing, it could become an axle replacement and that is very pricey.

Now I'm not a technician so this is maybe has a few hooks and eyes to this story but you understand the imagery. It is impossible, therefore, also to have a high speed marriage functioning and surviving and giving you the pleasure on the long ride in life, longer or shorter as God determines, with the ups and downhill and the curves and the facing headwinds and sidewinds without a good functioning husband/wife relationship. It's like the axle and the wheel bearing. You could have an argument, what's more important the axle or the wheel bearing? Now maybe some of you here will have a technical mind and might answer me, but some of you have already said they're both important. So the whole argument about who is more important in marriage, the husband or the wife, is a moot argument. You can't have a good marriage if you both are not like the axle and the wheel bearing, working together to make that wheel turn. That's an important concept to keep in mind because our world, society says that what God is saying in the Scripture is totally outdated. "Submission? Headship? Come on." Right? But this is the word of God unchanging, so it is therefore very vital for you and me to keep in mind, what has God designed us to be.

So here's the catch, friends, to have this wheel bearing/axle problem that I had not happen is a very easy job, it is just making sure that we have a yearly repacking job of the wheel bearings. Now I'm not going to suggest that it's quite as easy to keep your marriage functioning that with an annual checkup on wheel bearings. That's not quite as easy, but I would argue tonight it's a lot easier than what we think. It has a lot to do with repacking the wheel bearing and respecting the axle, and the one is called unconditional love and the other one is called unconditional respect, and they're both unconditional and that's pretty hard in our fallen world because to show unconditional respect to someone who constantly fails is pretty hard, to show unconditional respect to someone who constantly fails is also pretty hard. I don't know which one is easier. I'm not a female and you are no males, so we don't know for sure what's easier. It's maybe not an important argument to have a discussion about what is easier or what is less easy.

So let's direct ourselves to the Ephesians 5 as we have read it already. I still argue that the Bible is by far the best marriage counseling book and really all these books that are written on marriage life are just only echoing again and again what this Bible says, and if you only would stick a little closer to the Scripture, we would save ourselves a lot of money on all these marriage books. So I realize, of course, that there is much in the books that is valuable dug out of the Scriptures. The designer of marriage, so we agree with that statement, knows best how to design marriage. We would agree with that statement? What is good and what is not good, what works, what won't work. So Ephesians 5, if you maybe would think back on the former sessions, is actually built totally on what we

reviewed about his needs versus her needs. If you go through that needs matrix, thinking, and you go back to Ephesians 5, you notice that in a brilliant way the Holy Spirit has built this whole marriage design in such a way that it will ultimately also totally satisfy the primary needs of us as men and the primary needs of you as women.

What was the primary need of men? Can you remember what it was? Respect, admiration. Respect, that's what we men thrive on and boys thrive on that, men thrive on that. What's the primary need usually, I mean we're generalizing, of the female? Love or affection or cherishing. You know, these kind of words. That's the primary need. Now there are other needs. We have looked at those five primary, now you look at this chapter and what does it do? What does God say women are to show primarily to their husbands is respect. What is God saying when men primarily show to their wives is love? Exactly as the Lord God designed it, so he designed the entire instructions of marriage life.

So God sets out these directions in view of these primary needs. He know, men, he knows if the wheel bearing, the wife, is not repacked, re-greased or whatever word you use, regularly she cannot bear the load and she's gonna cut a groove in you like a wheel bearing does when it begins to burn up, and make you as an axle useless. Yeah? So take that thought again, if we as husbands don't take this internal wheel bearing, our wife, and take care of her, she will start burning up. That image is there. But God also knows if the husband's internal strength is continually sliced up by a wheel bearing that doesn't function well, yeah, if you as a woman are continually cutting into this husband, you also won't have a functioning husband. Do you see how both of these function together? The one cannot do without the other.

Now therefore the argument about whose position is more important than the other is a totally pointless discussion and a husband and a wife cannot do without each other as the wheel cannot do without an axle and a wheel bearing. Now if you grasp that tonight, we have made major progress already. The one is not more important than the other. We are equally part of the design in how God wants this wheel of marriage to run.

You can also use another imagery and we're closer to the text, the head cannot do without the body and the body cannot do without the head. Well, which one is most important is a totally pointless argument. You can't have either one without the other. So you as husband and wife in your marriage situation both need to pull the weight to make the marriage, indeed, flourish into what it is meant to flourish.

You can't have an army captain without soldiers. Now who's most important in the army? Yeah, well, the guy with the four stars, you get more salary maybe, but that's really maybe a misappropriation of funds, I would say, however you call it because, really, who's doing the hardest work and sometimes the most dangerous work? It's the soldiers but yet you need someone who is the brain box and who does the thinking and the strategy. But to say that one is better than the other is a totally moot, pointless argument and so it is here in this book. God puts husband and wife in a unity and yet, of course, there are in this unity different roles and that's what we're gonna look at next. Tonight it's just the husband's part and that's why I'm glad Michelle was here. I feel a little bit more in

check when I have to do the husband's part tonight while she's here. Shawn already texted that to me and said, "Your wife better be there because I'm gonna watch her." So that's good, Shawn, you're sitting right on the strategic point there.

Now what is the husband's role in marriage? There are three parts tonight we're looking at. The first I call the challenge, the next one I call the sacrifice, and the third one I call the excitement. I couldn't think of a better word, maybe you can help me find a better word. But it's also about three L's. First of all, you are to be the learner, secondly you are to be the lover, and thirdly you are to be the leader, and I purposely do them in that order because you can't be a leader if you're not a learner and a lover. So that's why I put leadership on the very end. These first two lead towards the most exciting part, is to lead, but you can't do that when you're not a learner and when you're not a lover.

Now the text that we first look at is 1 Peter 3:7 and I'll read it. It's in your outline. I put it on there.

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.

Now why do I call that task of our husbands to be a learner? Now notice it says dwell with her according to knowledge. That's a command. This is not an option. You as men, I as men, we don't have an option but to learn. In order to dwell with a woman with understanding, that means with knowledge, that implies I have to learn about her. I don't let my feelings guide me how to lead her. I don't let my ideas guide me how to lead. I don't let my role model of my own parents guide me how to lead her. I have to learn to lead this woman according to her needs. God says dwell with her according to knowledge and obviously there is something perhaps true to what sometimes we say, "Well, you never can understand a woman," and that is probably true because you have to be a woman to understand a woman. I understand that, but still the command of the designer is dwell with them according to knowledge, so the rest of our life we men have agreed once we get married to be in school. If only we would have realized that, that all the rest of our life we would enroll in school, we might have had second thoughts about marriage. Some of you don't like school, right? You're never done, by the way, dwelling with them according to knowledge because the woman actually keeps on changing. So do you but so does she. So our needs, our situations, our life, our thoughts may be changing, her feelings need to guide us, her ideas, her needs and her thoughts need to inform you. So notice God commands us this. This is not our idea, this is our Creator's idea. "You wanted marriage, you do it according to my way."

Secondly, what does God say? God did not say change her, understand her. We men are not to change our wives. That's God's work. We may help them grow, of course we may help encourage, but that's not the first thing he asked us to do. He said dwell with them according to knowledge. Live with them, interact with them. Don't necessarily change them. Understand her. What does she think? What is really valuable to her? What does she love? What does she hate? How does she want to be loved? How does she want to be

led? What is it that this woman is all about? How does she tick inside? Well, what is the way to her heart? These are the things you and I need to figure out and if you haven't done that, well, then please start because it's gonna make your journey far more exciting once you get to know what it means that would turn this woman on in her heart and in her, let me put it back in that wheel bearing, if I don't know how to grease that wheel bearing, it's gonna burn out. And in this case, it's not just going to the book, the marriage book, no, sorry, the book of the directions that is about your wife is not here and not there but it's in her heart. That's where her book of directions is. You need to find that out out of her, and what it is, how she likes to be or needs to be loved. How much time does she need? What are the limits of her strength? How often does she need a repacking? I'll come back to that statement. I found out the hard way that wives need repacking, the wheel bearing thing, and that's something that we need to learn to see and to recognize.

Now number 3, God wants us to treat her as the weaker vessel, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel. We talked about weaker vessels already but your wife is not a concrete post. That's not what God said. Don't treat her like a concrete post. What do you do with a concrete post? You can push it, you can kick them, you can do all that but you don't do that with your wife because she is the weaker vessel, meaning she is the fragile china piece. She doesn't have this kind of a strength that we men, masculine people have. She has been created by God with a delicate touch. She needs a very delicate touch in how we talk, in how we listen, in how we hold her, yeah? That's the delicacy.

Fourthly, God says we are to dwell with her giving honor. Now that's interesting that this word "honor" is in this text. That's the same word we read in Ephesians three or four times about the woman having to respect her husband. Yeah? God says in this text and you men are to respect your wife. Same word in the Greek. So even though that women are called to do unconditional respect, God also says here you husbands are also to show unconditional respect, to show respect to her as God's creature.

And how do you show honor? Let's be a little practical. How do you show honor to a wife? Well, you don't treat her like a rough piece of wood, you handle her with soft touch. We don't speak to her as if she's not important, as if she doesn't have feelings. We don't talk to her as if she doesn't know anything. That's not giving honor. We don't interact with her as if she has no wise insight about me as a man, about us as a couple, about us as a family. Don't treat her like that. That's dishonorable. We are to treat our wives with honor because in that woman God has deposited gifts and skills and insights and contributions you better make use of, he says. You can't run the army without the soldiers as a captain. And you'd be a fool not to let the ground crew help you make the decisions.

So give them honor, these women, the spouse you have. Honor is to speak kindly. It's to listen politely. It's to avoid the things that provoke her. It is to show care about her feelings. It's to speak about her everywhere of the greatest respect. It's to compliment her on how she cooks and how she looks, even when she gets older. That's to show honor, yeah? That's to show that woman that feeling she is the number 1 all along. We

compliment her, how she makes the home and cares for the kids. Now all I'm just saying about, is said about is you show the first love the rest of your life because that's what we did when we used to date her. Remember that tenderness, that attention, that real carefulness? We really gave them this priority status. That's what we need to do, God says, all the way.

You also honor her, and this is important, men, by keeping her and back to that wheel bearing, packed with grease. You say, "How do you do that?" I give you the cheapest way first. It doesn't cost you anything. I mean, you come home from work, you send her away for a while. It doesn't cost you anything except a little extra sleep maybe or... Send her away especially in the case like some of you who are having young kids at home. My wife doesn't get that privilege anymore so often, at least at this point, but there used to be a time in my life that's what she got every week. I came home, she left once a week. Easy, right? Cheap. What's she going to do? Up to her. She goes to fly a kite? Fine. Go read a book by a lake? Fine. Go shop? Fine. Go have a coffee with a friend? Fine. But from now until the kids are in bed, I don't see you. That was my repacking of her once a week. You liked it, didn't you? It worked too, because, boy, she came flying back in that house ready to go again. It always amazes me how quick women rebound who have been giving, giving, giving, and then there's a little repacking job and they just come back afresh to start again. So please, men, that's cheap.

Second, the second best, not so cheap, just give her a back rub as she talks. That's all. No more. Just a back rub. Okay? But let her talk and you listen. Not quite as cheap because your tired hand, tired ear. But this is so important to repack this wheel bearing again. It's just practical. It doesn't take a whole lot. Or you prepare the supper while she sits in the Lazyboy chair, Lazygirl chair, guys. Just let her sit there and you do all the hard work for a moment. Now I know you're also tired but she's also tired and she has a seven day week, and you have only a five day week. So can't complain about this, men. Things are not quite equal at least not so far that our women only have a five day work week and we have a seven day work week. Now can you hear me complain about that if that would happen? So let's be honest with each other, sometimes it is a wonderful grease job when you say to your wife, "Go sit in the Lazygirl chair and let me take charge to clean up this house with all these kids. Okay, kids, let's go and let's go from all the rooms and every place so it's all tidied up so then we can relax." Now that's what we call, pardon?

"I said priceless.

Priceless, okay, but it doesn't cost a lot either yet, there's no dollars involved.

Lastly, I'll share the best that's a little less cheap: be more involved with the kids. There's no way to repack your wife, mother of the kids by you husbands, me husbands, getting more involved with the kids in a positive way. That is a tremendous relief so our wife doesn't feel she's on her own all the time.

Now let me share with you a big secret. Women, don't listen, okay, this is not for your ears but it's just for a man. Okay, the more you do this, the more payback you get. It's

really a bit of a selfish argument, isn't it? But the more you invest in your woman, the more you get back from them and I leave the dots dots on the side, but you want to have the functioning axle wheel bearing, wheel structure then be wise in maintaining.

Now the last part of this text. Husbands, dwell with your wife with knowledge, giving honor as unto the weaker vessel as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered. Now this last statement, very brief, God calls us to maintain the channels of spiritual communion that your prayers be not hindered. What has this to do with this whole passage you think? Well, first of all, it implies one thing, it implies that God expects that husband and wife have a spiritual relationship and have prayer time together. Together. Not just around the dinner table. Yeah?

The other day I had a couple again that had never prayed together in their privacy of their relationship. Now, friends, that's not just dinner table, that's maybe where they do it but privacy of your own life together. But you know, when the wife feels dishonored, feels downgraded, feels used or abused or unnoticed, what does every prayer that you pray with her as a husband feel like? Very hypocritical. You talk about nice things to God but she's hearing you through a different ear than what you are thinking. She's hearing you through the grid of, "Where's the respect? And where is the love? And where is the sacrifice? And where is the honoring?" And if that's not there, that spiritual relationship will be hindered.

So so much about learning. There's a lot more and I'll have an assignment for you on that to expand this a little bit more.

Let's go back to Ephesians 5. The second part is the sacrificial part, it is to be a lover. Now you can figure out yourself from Ephesians 5 that love is the key word about the husbands task within the marriage. We think about the word "love" today, our culture has completely redefined, I would say almost degraded the word "love." Love today is a feeling. It's associated with sex. It's an emotion. It's uncontrollable sometimes, blind. Now we have had love and we've taken the whole concept of love or charity in the Bible, and completely downgraded it and even though you and I are used to thinking about biblical things, even though that is true, our culture has an impact on our thinking more than what we realize. Yeah?

Love in the Bible has three words. In the Greek there are four words for love. I have my outline real quick, the word eros, which is our English "erotic," is to love sexually and sensually and passionately. Now it has a place in marriage, of course, but it's interesting that word is not in the Bible. It's in the Greek but not in the Bible. God does not use that word at all to describe love anywhere in the Scripture as we do. So it's remarkable that he disassociates that from the concept of love.

The second word is the word "stergo," that's the love of natural affection between parents and children. They have a stergo love. That's just natural. It has to grow natural. In the description of the perilous times, God speaks about that that stergo love shall get less and less, and we see that today. That's unnatural.

Now the third love is the word "phileo" and that's to love emotionally. That's called the friendship love. That's not natural, that's sometimes grown between friends and friends. That's the word that Peter used when he speaks about his love to Jesus. He says, "Do you love me," Jesus asked Peter, and Peter says, "I phileo thee, Lord." Now Jesus didn't ask phileoly, Jesus asked the last word, "agapao." He says, "Peter, do you agapao me?" And when Peter heard that question, he says, "No, Lord, I do not dare to say that but I cannot deny I have phileo love, I have a friendship love to thee." Yeah? If you go through that passage in the Greek, then after the second question, the third question, Jesus changes his agapao to phileo and he questions him in the last point, "Do you really phileo/love me, Peter," and then Peter really gets sad that Christ questions him again about his love and he says, "Lord, I know I have done bad things but thou knowest all things, I can't deny I do phileo/love thee."

Now that's not the word either we're looking at today, we are looking in chapter 5 of Ephesians at the fourth word, "agapao." That's the word that was describing the love that Jesus showed to the young rich ruler that we heard on Sunday morning. He loved him, agapao. That is to love as God loves. That is as deeply as love can be in God.

Now what is that kind of a love? Let me give you only two thoughts about it tonight. Agapao is seated in your will and not in your emotions. It's not a love of feelings. It's a love of willing. It's a love of choosing. It's sometimes the love of choosing despite your feelings. Yeah, as I said on Sunday morning, when Jesus saw that young rich ruler, there is not a heart of one to love than that arrogant, haughty, self-righteous young man. Those are the hardest type to love and he loved him. Was that a feeling love? No. No, that was a will love, that was a love that he chose with a steadfast determination to promote the well-being of someone else. That is the word "agapao." And you see, therefore Jesus can command us to love like that. You can't command feelings. You cannot command someone, you have to like him, the same as we can't command kids to like broccoli. You can't command it. You can command them to eat it, but you can't command them to like it. So I cannot be commanded to like someone, but I can be commanded to love someone because it has nothing to do with my feelings. God says even if your worst enemy sits in front of you and he is hungry, and he says, "Can I have something to eat?" You step over all your feelings and you make him the best meal you could imagine.

Now that's the type of love we husbands are to show to our wives. They can be the most annoying, nagging, failing, whatever word you can think of at this moment, and what does God say? Don't let your feelings guide you, husbands, you love your wife as Christ loved his church. Did Christ let his feelings guide him? No. It was love that gave, love that gave, sacrifice that gave up, it is non-selfish.

And of course, the best example of agapao love is how God loved. He gave his only begotten Son and you notice the word "gave"? It's a deed. It's an action. It's a sacrifice. It has nothing to do with his feelings at that point, and indeed when God looked at the world, he had feelings of anger, he had feelings of disgust when he looked at this

detestable world that rebelled against him, and yet he stepped over his feelings and he gave his Son and sent him into this world.

Now that is the model of love that God sends before us, and you notice, friends, when Christ came, what did he give up in order to love his church? He gave up his honor. He gave up his reputation. You go read what kind of things they said about him all his life: he's a winebibber; he's a friend of harlots. Imagine this, somebody say that to you, "You're a friend of harlots." Ow. He's giving it up. Why? He loves his church. He's willing to give up his comfort. He has no place where to lay his head. Here is the Son of God and he is so suffering and he's giving his energy, he's giving his time, finally he gives his body and his soul to love them.

That's what God says how you husbands are to love your wife, even if your wife is like Christ's church is to Christ. Now what is Christ's church like to Christ? Well, if you know anything of the saving grace in your life, you know that you are every day grieving him and dishonoring him and failing him and disrespecting him and doing all these things in our minds and in our lives in word, deeds and thoughts, and how does Christ love his church? Unconditionally. That's our task. Not easy. That's agapao love.

Now let's be a little bit specific. What does that love look like? I already said it is the love Christ did do. Now I say this very plainly and I mean it that way, Christ did not show his love in just some whispered words in moments of passion, and I say it this way because I've heard sometimes wives complain to me about that, "The only time I hear from him 'I love you' is when we have a moment of passion." That's not love, that's just whatever it is, lust and wanting to have something. And brethren, if you are thinking about your own life and let's think about that, is this love of Christ whispered words? No, his love was deeds done, sacrificing himself.

So therefore in number 2, it is love and deeds done as well as in words spoken. If you have your Bible open, you notice in verse 25, "Husbands, love your wives, even," in the same way, "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." You notice the word is important. Words are very important to our women. Words wash. Words cleanse. Words build up. Words reassure. Words give encouragement.

Our wives need loads and loads of words of appreciation and of recognition. They need tender praise also in front of others. We need to brag about them before others. No, it's the wrong word to brag. We may compliment them. We may extol their virtue. That's what Proverbs 1:31 male did in the gate, he praised his wife in the gate. He said to all the other ones, "You should see my wife." No, "You should hear what my wife...", right, in a positive way. Now I know you men are working perhaps in environments where men speak very derogatory about their spouses and about their wives, at least I hear that sometimes from others who work in those settings. That's never to be in our case. So don't forget to praise her, please, for her looks, for her dress, for her beauty, for her cooking, for the ironing, for the washing, and for all the other endless tasks that most of our women do as they are taking care of our home, households.

Now thirdly, it's love, it's a hard one, that I like to bestow on my own body. Yeah? Jesus goes, he knows us husbands. He can say a beautiful example of Christ's love but he gives another example that's even closer to the heart, he says, "Husbands," verse 28, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." Now I don't only talk to my body when my body is tired. When my body is tired, I grab a pillow and I find a bed. That's what I do for my body. Or I fix a cup of coffee and grab a donut and take a book and curl up in a chair. That's how I take care of my body when it is tired, right? Or whatever you do when you're tired after your days at work. You notice I don't only talk to my body and say, "Well, I'll have a bit of a better day tomorrow hopefully." No, I cherish it. I nourish it. No, God says, "Look, men, you are to do that what you do to your own body and project it onto your wife. That's how you are to love them." So to nourish means to feed, to cherish means to warm. Another way, nourish is to strengthen, to cherish is to cuddle. To nourish is to physically strengthen, to cherish is the emotional strengthening.

So here the sky's the limit, right? If your body is tired, what do you imagine you want? And so you think about yourself. "I'm so tired tonight, worked so hard, I just can't wait for when I come home and I sit down and I relax and just dream away." Excellent. Do that but now just take the leap to your wife and say, "Now I am to love her as I love my own body. So what I'm gonna do for my tired wife, now what I am going to do for her is what I like to do to my own body." Now I can guarantee you something, that wheel bearing is getting really greased. It's gonna turn that wheel really well and what's going to happen to you, then? Remember? That's gonna make the axle feel a lot better too. I want you to be realizing, men, that the big secret in marriage life is still a lot on us and that is my experience, at least, from a lot of counseling I've done, that in many cases it is the husband who has the secret of this.

Now number D, it's a love that seeks to satisfy all the needs of my wife and I would not elaborate on it but there are seven strings to this beautiful instrument that we might call wife, if I would compare her now to a musical instrument, there's seven strings on her, and each of these seven strings needs to be nourished and cherished and loved and satisfied by you. What are the seven strings? In case you forget, they're on your outline and they're not in order of what I necessarily would think they are in order. Maybe you can order them yourself. But there are the physical needs, there is emotional needs, there is intellectual needs, there is social needs, recreational needs, sexual needs, and spiritual needs. You notice all seven, all seven we husbands need to nourish one way or the other, and this may be a way that you can have a chat about and talk about how can you fulfill each of these needs.

Now if one of these doesn't get satisfied, what's gonna happen to the wheel bearing? It's like one little ball is not in the right place. What happens to the wheel bearing then, Shawn? I don't know anything about wheel bearings but I imagine it's not gonna work, right? If one or two of those little balls are not in the right place or they're broken or whatever, the whole thing is gonna go no matter how much grease you put into it. You see the importance of this? These seven strings, it's a complete number, by the way, are

seven aspects of the human nature that God asked us to satisfy and that is gonna make this beautiful balance in the marriage.

Now number E, it's a love that protects her from over-stretch, you know, demanding more when there's nothing left to give. What's that going to do? Well, that's like you taking a rubber band and it is really stretched and you keep on stretching it, what's going to happen to this rubber band? You're gonna over-stretch it and it's never going to be a rubber band again. It loses its stretch. Now we don't want that to happen to our wife so we need to protect her. Therefore, friends, live responsibly, also with regard to a new pregnancy. As I was thinking about this topic, I think there is a need here for some real good instruction on the subject of family planning or whatever you want to call it. But dwelling with knowledge and loving your wife responsibly also means that you are considering not over-stretching this woman of yours with all what family life brings.

Number F, I will go quickly through that, but love that assists her in all the family responsibilities. All of them. There's not a single family responsibility we husbands should not feel we need to do if it needs to be done. We take our share. One man came to Luther once and he said, "Luther, do you think, Pastor Luther, do you think that I should change diapers?" Back then that was an argument, back in the 1550s. And Pastor Luther said, "I will answer you on Sunday." Now I wonder what the sermon text was going to be, right? What was he going to preach about? Well, he preached on John 13, on Jesus washing the disciples' feet. So he answered the man that way. He said if Jesus was willing to do that, you'd better change diapers. There's nothing unmanly about that. If it is in the context of love and sacrifice, go for it.

G. It's love that sacrifices your own agenda, your own hobby, your own promotion, your own desire for rest. I'm looking at my wife here so I don't get a wink, of course, but sacrificing your own agenda, right, or my own promotion, or my own extension of my work. We men are workaholics. No, we're not, we just are workers and we like to do a lot of work and people might ask us to do something and we quickly say yes. When our wife is asking us to do something we say, "I'll think about it." Now I'm sure you recognize that. I recognize that. So, please, that is not what love is. Love is, indeed, we drop everything if our family needs us and love that demonstrates practically that apart from Christ she has the first place is sacrificial love.

Lastly, it's a love that includes her in your life, your past, your present, and your future, your hopes and your dreams. Let's not make the woman a wallflower to decorate your life and decorate your home. She is your assistant and God wants you to include her. And you know, I have often heard it from my wife, she always gives me feedback, she says, "I just so value it when you include me in your life struggles, assignments and so on." And I guess it gives Michelle a value feeling and an important feeling. So your work that you have maybe out of the house, I have a lot if it inside of my house, but your wife is interested in that. She wants to hear what the problems are. She wants to hear maybe how to help you. She may never put up her hands, she may never pick up a water-blaster but she may hear about some of those problems and the frustrations....

"She'll solve them for you."

...and she'll solve them for you, excellent! I will give my wife credit for that too because Michelle often helps me to solve some problems as well. Now by the way, when you include her, you are tackling one of the seven strings. For example, intellectual. Yeah? That's a very important one and if you are only working with little kids all the time and you're having to talk a simple language and you have to clean up a lot of things, sometimes our women get intellectually a little starved and they love to have a little intellectual challenge, and one of them would be you include them on your level.

Now lastly then, the exciting part is to be her leader, and there is a little bit of information there in Ephesians 5 on that in the word "head." A husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and I purposely didn't start there today. I purposely ended here with talking about the headship because, why? If I start with headship right away, what's going to happen with the wives, or what's gonna happen to us men, "Oh, we are the head." No? You only come to the right understanding of the headship when you've gone through the learning and to the loving gates, as it were.

But headship is important. 1 Corinthians 11:3, let's read that text, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." And then one more from Matthew 20, princes of Gentiles exercise dominion over them, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister...Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Now headship, friends, is an extremely important subject. We as husbands are the head of our wife. She the body, we the head. Now I am running out of my time so I'll make it very very brief with you, but that implies a union, a very vital union. Can your head live without your body? It will not survive for a second. So our bodies, can they live without the head? So the imagery that God picked is, of course, very vital. The head and the body are so intimately united that the one cannot do without the other. Yeah? But on the other hand, it also implies authority. Who is over the commanding in my body? It's the head, it's the brain, the center, that is where most of the commands are coming from that go to my body and, of course, my body is very smart, it gives commands to my body that's gonna finally backfire up in a positive way. Right? This is a constant going back and forth in this beautiful creation that God has made, head and body.

So we have authority. God has given us a position of power. I hesitate to use that word but it is still the word I want to use. We, as men, have been given the position of power. It's not superiority, it's delegated position with some authority in it. It implies also responsibility and what is now the responsibility of you as a leader in marriage?

Now I forgot to take my little picture along so I made one here for you. Just picture for a moment your relationship with your husband. You are the head, right? He's on the top. Here on the bottom of this triangle is your wife and your kids, your family. Here's how we think about headship, the guy at the top, I give the commands, I do the ordering, everybody has to obey me, I'm the man in charge, headship. Jesus says, "That's not the

way it's going to be in my kingdom. That's how the Gentiles do it. The Gentiles exercise dominion over their subjects and it goes down this way. But in your and in my kingdom, it's not that way. This is what headship looks like in my kingdom, here's the head. Those of you who want to be the greatest is going to be the servant right here, and here are the kids and the family." Now instead of the arrow from the top down, the arrow is going from the bottom up and if you picture yourself as a leader not saying, "Okay, I'm in charge," but if you picture yourself as leader, "These people are dependent on me," then you have the picture of headship. Then you have the picture of delegated authority. Yes, you are in charge as husbands, but we are in charge to support our wife and our children and our family to exist as the best possible family life. Now this is tiring, isn't it, to hold up, to stand on the bottom? To sit on the top, that's easy, you just tell everybody else to do the work. But to be the real head is to be on the bottom and to support and to sacrifice and to love and to be there.

So headship, friends, if you picture that in your mind, it is to lead and to be responsible to guide your wife and your family. Yes, you are the axle, you are the main support of the wheel, the wheel bearing is not the main and now I am to take care of my wheel bearing. So as a leader, you set the goals with your wife. You lead in the decisions with your wife. You solve the problems, you overcome the challenges. So what is a good leader? He is an initiator. He's a manager. He is a uniter behind a common goal.

I say it in many marriage situations that you need to have an agreement about the direction you go. There is not too many times in my family, in my marriage life, and Michelle can vouch for that, that I made a decision unilaterally by myself contrary to her feelings or contrary to her insights. If it was at such an impasse, then we decided to make no decisions. Yeah? Because you both need to pull the plow in the same direction. Yes, eventually it is my authority, my position, that I need to make the main solutions, sorry decisions, but never as a dictator, as a manager, as a uniter.

So maybe the last picture of the headship is the picture of the shepherd. The Bible loves to use the picture of the shepherd and we as men are shepherds. Now how do you lead a flock of sheep? Not with a big stick. Not with a big voice. These animals, you scatter them all over the place. You have to gently lead them so that they follow you. That's headship.

Now that's exciting because there's some thrill to that task but we can't do it if we've not come to the gate of learning and loving to lead, and I've yet to find too many examples where the husband is a learner, intend to learn what his wife's needs are and is seeking to love her as Christ loved and lead as a shepherd where we then have big submission problems on the wife's part. We have to look at that next time, the unconditional respect, but it is much easier to have unconditional respect to someone who also shows the unconditional love, learning and leading.

Now I leave it with this tonight. There is a bunch of homework assignments that are going to take you a little time and, again, please take the time to read at least through it and discuss it with each other.

Now let me quickly look if there are any emails that came in on this particular subject tonight. No, there aren't. Good.

Then are there any questions from you here? Did I make it all so clear? So much to digest, I know it is a flash course here but anyway... There's three books here that I'd like to lend out and I have put my name in it so if you don't return it, you are guilty of theft. But this is an interesting book if you've never read a book on this subject of the difference between males and females, "Men are from Mars." I don't have total respect for John Gray, I don't think he's even a Christian but the insight in this book is phenomenal. He's a counselor, of course, so he's really shown a lot of difference. So if you want to take it along, go along. This is another book that you will recognize a lot of the teaching of the last two sessions, this is from William Harley, "Fall in love and stay in love," and it deals a lot more in depth with his needs and her needs that I dealt with in the last two sessions. So if you're interested in borrowing this one, go for it. Now those of you inspired by my talk tonight and say I want to take this a little farther, this is probably the best book on the husband. Lou Priolo is a really good author, has a lot of insight and if you really want to make your marriage much better than what it is today, then go ahead and take this book or buy the book if you want to just have it on your own and you can write it up and mark it up.

There are no questions so we close together in prayer.

Lord God, we thank thee again for this evening tonight as thou hast given us so much to think about again. And Lord, again and again we recognize that the word of God is relevant, even relevant to the days in which we live even though it has been written so many years ago because it is thy word, it's a living word. We pray, O God, that the instruction we have received tonight for us as husbands to be learners, to be lovers, and to be leaders, may we be more and more perfected on those three tasks, Lord, that thou hast given us as husbands of our wives. We pray that thou forgive us, Lord, the many shortcomings that cleave to everything. It never will be a perfect marriage, it never will be exactly according as the Scriptures also set before us, Lord. We remain sinners and we confess that daily we fail. We let ourselves be guided by our feelings, our often depraved feelings. O God, please, will thou renew our hearts and deepen our marriage and guide us all. As we now return home, will thou also bring us safely to our homes again. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Good night.

Marriage Enrichment Session Five

His Role vs. Her Role in Marriage (1)

THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND

Introduction:

A. What is more important: *the axle or wheel-bearing?*

1. The point of the question is not the *answer* but the *relationship*
2. In marriage *functioning roles* define the joy of the relationship

B. Ephesians 5:22-33

1. God's directions are *built* on his needs vs. her needs
2. God sets out *directions in view of these primary needs*
3. The *argument* about whose position is *more important* is as pointless as *What is more important: the axle or wheel-bearing?*

I. What is the husband's role within the marriage?

A. The Challenging Part: ***Be her learner*** (1 Peter. 3:7)

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, as and being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

1. God commands to dwell with her with *knowledge*
2. God didn't tell us to *change* her but *understand* her

3. God wants us to treat her as *the weaker vessel*

4. God calls us to *give her honor*

a. How does God want us to show her honor?

- your *soft touch*
- your *gentle words*
- your *first love*
- your *wise investment*

5. God calls us to *maintain channels of spiritual communication*

B. The Sacrificial Part: ***Be Her Lover*** (Eph. 5:25, 28-29, 33)
*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church,
and gave Himself for it.*

1. Our culture has *degraded* love to lust – feelings – passions

2. Greek has 4 words for love

a. *erao*: to love sexually, sensually, passionately

- never used in Bible

b. *Stergo*: *to love w/ natural affection – child's love*

- 2 Tim. 3:3; Rom. 1:31

c. *Phileo*: to love emotionally, friendship love

- John 11:36 - John 20:15ff

d. *Agapao*: to love deeply – as God loves

- Eph. 5:25, 28

3. What is *agapao* love?
 - a. *Agapao is seated in will and not in emotions*
 - b. *Agapao sacrifices – gives up – non-selfish*

4. Now the details: *What does this love really look like?*
 - a. It is love like Christ did **do** (Eph. 5:26-27)
 - His love wasn't *whispering words*'
 - His love was *deeds done*
 - b. It is love also were *well spoken words* (Eph. 5:26)
 - c. It is love like I bestow on my own body (vs. 28)
 - nourish: *to feed – strengthen - physically*
 - cherish: *to warm – cuddle – focus on emotional needs*
 - d. It is love *seeks to satisfy all the needs of my wife*
 - seven needs: physical – emotional – intellectual – social – recreational – sexual – spiritual
 - each of these *calls for **nourishing and cherishing***
 - e. It is love that *protects her from over-stretch*
 - f. It is love that *assists her in all family responsibilities*

- g. It is love that *sacrifices your own agenda (hobby, promotion, desire for rest)*
- h. It is love that *includes her in all your life*

C. The Exciting Part: ***To be her Leader***

- *For the husband is the head of the wife. Eph. 5:23*
- *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*
- *Princes of Gentiles exercise dominion over them (...) but it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (...) Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3; Matthew 20:25-28)*

1. God assigned us as husband the *head-position*

- a. implies *union: we have become 'one'*
- b. implies *authority: God-given position of power*
- c. implies *responsibility: we are to lead*

2. What is the *responsibility* of the leader in marriage?

- a. as leader *you are responsible to care for your wife/family*
- b. as leader *you are to set goals – lead in decisions – solve problems – overcome challenges*
 - good leaders are *initiators – managers – unifiers*
 - good leaders are *not dictators – imposers – know-it-all*

3. The definition of the leader in *picture: Biblical shepherd*

Home-Construction Assignments

1. Husband: List five ways in which you like to show honor to your wife. Share with her the five ways to verify she experiences your five ways as honorable.
2. Husband: Reflect on the three L's for husband: *Learner – Lover – Leader*. Evaluate yourself to determine which of the three is weakest and strongest in you. Share your thoughts with your wife and develop a plan how to strengthen all three.
3. Colossians 3:19 speaks, "*Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*" Obviously, husbands can become bitter and God warns about the root of bitterness (Heb. 12:15). Evaluate and discuss if you sense bitterness towards your wife. What causes this feeling of bitterness which often is expressed in resentment, impatience, anger, evil thoughts, neglect, distance or domestic violence?
4. Are you loving your wife the way she wants to be loved or are you only loving her the way you want to love her? In other words, miscommunication of love occurs when you are not on her frequency. Google the question *Specific Ways to Demonstrate Love to Your Wife* and find the list of 100 questions by Wayne Mack. Mark each for a starter and share your answers with your wife to check whether she appreciates your choices! Don't forget to do them!
5. In 2 Tim. 2:24-25 God gives instructions to church leaders but much of this is applicable to domestic leaders as well, "*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.*" So, if pastors and elders are to use gentleness when to instruct their people, how much more must husbands (and fathers) use gentleness when dealing with their spouses? Opposition in church requires meekness, then opposition in the family requires also meekness. Talk together about a strategy how deal with corrections

(both ways) that may need to be given to each other. What are the Biblical and practical rules you must agree to follow?

6. As husband we need to be our wife's student so that we can dwell with her with understanding. Lou Priolo in *The Complete Husband* provides some guidelines for asking questions of your wife to get to know her better. As he wrote, "*Questions are to communication as food is to eating*" then it is important to know how or what to ask. He offers the following guidelines (adapted),
 - a. Avoid asking 'why' questions. Questions that begin with *what* or *how* are much more effective for securing facts, thoughts and motives. *Why* questions tend to go into justification.
 - b. Learn to create new questions which flow out of your wife's answers. Suppose you asked your wife's opinion about buying x-thing. Her answer may be, "It doesn't really matter because, based on the past, you aren't likely to consider my opinion." How do you respond to this? Defensive? Cutting? Or, "Sweetheart, what have I done that leads you to believe I would not consider your opinion? I am not aware of that so can you help me to see where you're coming from?"
 - c. Be careful not to interrupt her before she's finished answering.
 - d. Avoid the "Yes" or "No" type questions.
 - e. Be a learner and a servant. So, let the tone be gentle, respectful, like a physician helping a patient. Take the position of a real student eager to learn.

Good book suggestion: *The Complete Husband* by Lou Priolo