

The Spirit-Filled Husband

Ephesians 5:22-33

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It's a lengthy passage, but I want to read Ephesians 5:25-33 and go back and unpack them verse by verse. Paul says, "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," that is, the church, "holy and without blemish." Look at verse 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," respects or "reverence her husband."

I heard the story many years ago about a wife that had a Christmas tradition. Every year she would buy the family, particularly her husband, and the kids would work along with it, a jigsaw puzzle. It was a great big jigsaw puzzle with tiny little pieces. I don't do puzzles, and I think people who do these massive puzzles, spending six years putting them together...if that's you, I'll pray for you after church tonight. She would always buy this puzzle, and they would start on Christmas. It would take the whole year with the family getting involved putting the puzzle together. What she would do is take the box and hide it so they couldn't see the picture while putting the pieces together. It would take a long time to figure it out. One year she bought a puzzle, and they started working on it. It just so happened that she left the picture out on the countertop. Her husband saw the picture and thought, Oh cool! I'm going to really get her this year. I'll look at the picture and work on the puzzle. I'll put the pieces together and this is really going to go great. I'll amaze her with how fast I can put it together. He struggled and struggled and struggled. He finally got a couple of pieces together. Then, he began to realize, as he was looking at the box, that the colors on the pieces did not match the box. It turned out, that year she bought two puzzles and switched the covers of the boxes, so he was working off the wrong picture and having a heck of a time making the puzzle come together.

What a picture that is, or illustration, how that many people today are trying to put their marriage together by looking at the wrong picture painted by the world instead of by the Word of God. If we're going to find that the pieces are going to fit, and we're going to have a happy marriage, we're going to have to follow God's pattern or picture. Amen?

We learned that the Bible teaches that marriage is a divine institution. That is so foundational and so important. It's not man-made or culture, it's God who designed and created marriage. We looked at that in Genesis 2. We also discovered last Wednesday night that God has a purpose, plan, and a pattern for the wife. We put it into three categories: the wife is to love her

husband, submit to her husband, and respect her husband. We actually get that tonight in verse 33 at the end of the section. Those were the points that we looked at for the wife—love your husband, submit to your husband, and respect your husband.

Just because the wife is to submit does not give the husband the right or the license to act like a petty tyrant. I pointed out that if the wife is to submit to her husband, the husband is to love his wife; if the children are to obey their parents, parents are not to provoke their children to anger; if the servant is to obey his master, the master is to give to the servant that is just and right and equal. The Bible is a balanced book, and it balances out the relationships in the home.

What are the husband's responsibilities in marriage? Again, there are three of them. This is not exhaustive, nor are the wife's three exhaustive. I tried to narrow it down to keep it simple. If you're taking notes, we're going to look at each one. It is husbands dwell with your wife with understanding; secondly, honor her highly; and thirdly, love her sincerely. Again, I put these points together after many years of preaching through this passage. I use it for my marriage ceremonies, but he's to dwell with her understandingly, honor her very highly, and love her very sincerely. Let's look at each one of these tonight for the men or for the husbands.

First, dwell with her understandingly. Now, don't let the first two points throw you for a curve. I don't normally do this, the first two points come from 1 Peter 3:7. We're going to come back to this passage in Ephesians. If you want to, you don't have to, especially you guys (and it wouldn't hurt the gals as well) turn in your Bible to 1 Peter 3:7. The first two points for the husbands come from this one verse. This is what it says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them," that is, your wife, "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." Just a little point, this Peter passage is another classic passage on marriage. It starts back in 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Here in Peter we find two things under this first point of dwell with her understandingly, that the husband is supposed to do with his wife; that is, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them," your wife, "according to knowledge." There are two things here: dwell with them and do it according to knowledge. It is a good idea, I highly recommend, that if you're married that you live together. I've met people, "Well, he lives in New York and I live in Los Angeles. Every few months we fly to the middle of the country and spend a day together and go back to our careers," and you don't really live together. God's design, God's intention, is for husband and wife to dwell together. This talks about your dwelling together as one. And, notice, "...dwell with them according to knowledge."

The word "dwell" means to be at home. This refers to the physical relationship. Some Bible scholars feel that it actually implies the co-habit relationship and infers the conjugal rights of both the husband and the wife. If you're taking notes, married couples write down 1 Corinthians 7. It's so very important. It talks about your sexual relationship there, the conjugal rights of the husband and the wife, and I believe that it's kind of connotated here in this concept of dwelling together with them. Some translations actually have cohabit with them alone, cross reference 1

Corinthians 7, so you are to dwell with your wife.

The practical invocation is that you should be with your wife, spend time with your wife, come home to your wife. Some guys, when they work all day want to stop by and hang out with the boys before they get home, and they don't want to get home and have time with their wife. Or, when they get home, they're not really home. Have you ever noticed that, Ladies, how sometimes your husband is home, but he's not home? He maybe goes right out into the garage and he's working on the car or maybe he gets the remote control in his hand, "Whoa!" The game comes on, or whatever sports that he's interested in and "Get outta the way! Dad's got the remote control." He's the head of the house, praise God. His wife's trying to talk to him, or maybe he's reading a magazine.

I was reading a magazine one time years ago and my wife was talking to me. She kind of got my attention. She said, "What did I just say?" I was so busted. "I have no idea what you just said. Can you just tell me all over again?" You see, I was there, but I wasn't there. I was there, but I wasn't listening. I was there, but I wasn't giving her my attention. I was there, but I wasn't really dwelling in that sense with my wife focusing on her and how her day went, cohabiting with her in my relationship with her. You do this, notice verse 7, "...according to knowledge."

Some have said that "dwell with them," speaks of our physical cohabiting with them, and "...according to knowledge," speaks of our intellectual and our soulish relationship—the mind and the soul and the emotions of dwelling together with them intellectually—as well because the phrase literally means be understanding or in an understanding way. The implication is that you spend time with your wife dwelling with her, that you actually get to know her and try to understand her. Now, a lot of guys are going say, "There ain't no way, preacher boy, that I'm gonna understand my wife. I've been married 45 years, and I still don't understand that woman." That doesn't mean you don't keep trying. It doesn't mean you don't work at it. What is her favorite color? What is her favorite flower? What kind of music does she like? What kind of food does she like? What really is something that pleases and blesses her? What is it that you can do to be a blessing to her, understanding her, knowing her moods, her wants, and her likes?

Dwelling, spending time with your wife, and studying and getting to know her, that's what Peter is actually telling these husbands to do in this relationship. He says to them, "Know her in an understanding way," so, men, do you know and dwell with your wife?

Here's the second thing that men are supposed to do, honor their wife very highly. First, they dwell with them understandingly and then honor her very highly. Again, 1 Peter 3:7, "...giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel," notice it's comparative—weaker not weak vessel—and perhaps it's talking about physically, maybe it's talking about emotionally, I don't know, but that phrase indicates that both have weaknesses, but your wife is a weaker vessel.

Notice that you are "...heirs together of the grace of life," and if you do dwell with them and give knowledge unto them in an understanding way, notice "that your prayers be not hindered."

What does that mean? It means if you don't do what Peter says you should do, men, your prayers will not be answered. This is one of several very clear statements in the Bible as to why prayers go unanswered. If a husband is not giving his attention to his wife, dwelling with her in an understanding way, then his prayers can be hindered if he doesn't honor her as Peter says.

Sometimes people think that I can pray and God should answer my prayer, but I can disregard my commitment to this most important relationship on earth, that is, my wife, and that God's going to answer my prayers. This is a direct reference to the reason for unanswered prayers—a husband that does not honor his wife as a weaker vessel—so give honor unto the wife. This is said to be the emotional aspect; so we have physical, intellectual or soulish, and then the emotional as well.

This phrase, “giving honour unto the wife,” means to assign great value to. Write down Proverbs 18:22. The writer of Proverbs says, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.” That's so cool. You find a wife? You find a good thing, and you obtain favor from the Lord. I believe that your wife is one of the greatest gifts God can give to you. Now, salvation is number one, but the second thing is your wife. She is the most precious treasure that you have, and so you need to give honor unto her and place value upon her. She is a gift from the Lord.

I want to go back to Ephesians 5, and this is our main focus tonight. Here's my third point. Not only dwell with her understandingly, and honor her highly, but thirdly, love her sincerely. There's a lot of different ways to break down this passage, but notice the main point in Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives.” Wives submit, but husbands don't treat them like subjects, you are to love her, value her, honor her, dwell with her, and understand her. This is an amazing statement in the Bible given the time and the culture because many men had multiple wives, many men had great freedom that women didn't have, and many men looked at their wives as an object, “I have a few cows, I have a few sheep, I have a few donkeys, and I have a few wives.” This is elevating, like nothing ever before in the history of mankind, that a husband is actually commanded here in the Scriptures, “You are to love your wife.”

Love is not a passing emotion. I love what Warren Wiersbe said. He said, “Love is not a passing emotion, it's a continual devotion.” Love isn't all about feeling. You don't wake up every morning singing to each other with the birds singing in the window and the sun glistening off the eggs as she makes your breakfast in the kitchen. Sometimes you don't have that feeling, but you love your wife and you are devoted to her in spite of the feelings or the emotions. Those follow like the caboose, but you make the decision to love your wife.

Love that's used here, the agape love, seeks the highest good of that object loved. It's amazingly elevating to the woman that she's to be loved. It was never heard of before that time in that culture, and it's in the present active imperative or present imperative. It's a command in the present tense which means ongoingly, continually, habitually love your wife. Not just when she's lovable, when she's agreeable, or when she's pleasing to you, but continually, ongoingly, habitually. It becomes clear when we understand that the word used in the Greek here is the

Greek word, you guessed it, agape.

The Greeks had several words for love, we only have one word for love. I know you've heard me teach on this before, but just a reminder, we'll say, "I love my wife and I love my dog, and I love peanut butter and jelly, and I love to go hunting and I love to watch football." We just use one word "love" for all those things, which obviously our love for our wife is greater than our love for our dog or our shotgun or car or whatever it is we're doing. The English language is quite limited. When we say, "I love you," what kind of love are we speaking of? They had the Greek word eros, which is sometimes related to the erotic love, but it's a physical attraction or physical love, and that's an element that's fine to have in a marriage, but it shouldn't be the only element in a marriage relationship. Then, they had the word storge, which meant a family love, the love you have for a brother, sister, mom or dad, uncle or cousin. They also had the word philia which speaks of a fondness or a friendship, that you really like somebody. We have our word "Philadelphia" which means brotherly love.

Then, they had the word agape. That word actually came into prominence because of Christianity. The world at this time knew nothing about this love which is sacrificial, self-denying, and giving. It's used in John 3—you know the passage—verse 16. "For God so loved," agape, "the world, that he gave," there's the key, He gave. It's a giving love. "...his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It's pretty simple, God's love is giving. It is self-denying. Jesus displayed it when He gave His life upon the cross. God the Father demonstrated it when He sent His only Son to redeem us from our sin.

We all know that 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 is a great description in the Bible of this agape love. It's actually telling husbands what kind of love they should have for their wives. Let me read it to you from a modern translation. "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." Agape love doesn't change over the years. "Well, you know, I used to love you but now you're not attractive anymore." "I used to love you," or "I don't like you anymore," or "I've fallen out of love." If you agape somebody, you're never really going to fall out of love, so to speak, because it's not an emotion. It's not based on circumstances, and it's not based on the object loved. Whether that love is reciprocated or returned, it doesn't matter, it goes on giving and giving and giving. I love that passage in 1 Corinthians that says, "Love never fails." Love is patient and kind. Love is not irritable. What an amazing description it is of that love.

Every husband should read 1 Corinthians 13, and then ask God to fill him with the Holy Spirit. The title of this study is: The Spirit-Filled Husband, as we looked at the Spirit-filled wife. That God-given agape love, the same love a wife is to have for her husband, the husband is to have and shower upon his wife. It is, Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit. You can't manufacture it. You can't make it happen in your heart. God has to give it to you through the work of the Holy Spirit. So, you must be born again of the Spirit to have the Spirit of God living in you, and then

you surrender to the Holy Spirit to be filled (go back and look at Ephesians 5:18 where we're commanded to be filled with the Spirit). Again, that's a command in the present tense, be continually being filled with the Spirit. Again, the key is the filling of the Spirit.

How is the husband to love his wife practically? Let's look at the verses and break it down. Let me give you four ways husbands should love their wives with God's agape love. First, He should love her sacrificially. I'm going to try not to tarry on these. You can just write them down. This is verses 26-27, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he," that is, the Lord in the church, "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." The love that a husband has for his wife is to have upon his wife a sanctifying effect. That means he's to be sanctifying her through prayer, through the Word, through his love. She becomes more holy and more Christ-like. Remember, marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. In verse 23, when Paul is talking to wives, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands...as the church is subject unto Christ."

All through this passage, especially as we wrap it up tonight, you're going to see that marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and His church. They're one and the husband's love for her is displayed by the love Christ has for the church in sanctifying the church. Is your wife more holy because of you or in spite of you? We have to be honest. Many times as husbands, my wife is more holy in spite of me, not because of me. Now, there's nothing wrong with the wife studying her Bible, knowing the Bible, sharing with her Bible, giving insights to her husband, but I really believe that the husband needs to take an active role in spiritual matters and Bible study and doctrine and be protecting, teaching, overseeing, leading and guiding his wife. She is your, kind of in a sense, congregation, and you are her pastor. You should be praying for her, sanctifying her through the Word of God and prayer. If you're not reading your Bible, you're not studying your Bible, you're not a man of the Word, you're not leading her in worship, leading her in prayer, leading her to the church and fellowship, then you're not really fulfilling your role in sacrificial, sanctifyingly loving her as Christ loved the church.

Go back, as I said, to verses 26 and 27. Jesus sanctifies and cleanses the church "...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." When will the church be presented to Christ holy and without blemish? Right now the church is in Christ and positionally we're holy and righteous, but when the Lord comes in the rapture, He will receive His bride, the church, the body of Christ, and the church will be presented to Christ holy and without blemish because of the work of Christ for us upon the cross. By the Word of God, the husband has a sanctifying effect upon his wife.

Write down John 17:17. Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The Word sanctifies our lives, our marriage, and the church. The Word of God is the cleansing agent. In John 15:3, Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." I know it sounds like I say this a lot, but the more you saturate your heart and your mind, men, and your wife with you, in the Scriptures, the Word of God, the more sanctified your lives

and your marriage will be in Christ. Sanctification is a process of being made holy, being made righteous, so we need that sanctifying work in our lives to walk in holiness and true godliness. If you neglect the Word of God, you neglect prayer, you neglect relying on the Spirit, then you start to backslide or stray away and problems come into the marriage relationship because you're walking in the flesh not in the Spirit.

Notice verse 27, on this point, Paul explains Christ's ultimate purpose for the church, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church," you might present her to yourself a glorious bride or wife, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it," or in your case she, the wife, "should be holy and without blemish," the sanctifying work of the Spirit through the Word and through the husband in the life of his wife.

The third thing the husband does to love her with agape love is he loves her affectionately, verses 28-30. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." He gives us the reason, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it," those are the key words, "even as the Lord the church," there again is that picture of Christ and the church, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Notice, love your wife as your own body, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh," but does two things, nourishes and cherishes it. When you're hungry, you feed your flesh. When you're thirsty, you get yourself something to drink. When you're tired, you put yourself to bed. You take care of yourself. So, you are to care affectionately for your wife. Two words are key: nourish and cherish. The word "nourish" means to feed or to bring up. The word "cherish" means to warm with body heat, so you are to love her affectionately, warming her with your body heat seeking to bring her up or build her up. How? With your words, actions, and your time spent together with your wife.

Again, many times, and I know it's a challenge, men are not maybe as verbal as the wife, some men are quite verbal, but they tend to not talk as much as the wife. You need to try to do your best to communicate with your wife, share your feelings, your thoughts, and talk to her. The only way you can get to know somebody is if you talk to that person. Your words can nourish her and bring her up and strengthen her as well as your actions, the way you treat her is so very important, and simply spending time together. I know we all get busy. Life has many pressures, but if you're married, you need to guard your time. Make sure that you have time together with one another.

When you have young children in the home, and there's the demand there, and many times the husband and wife are both working, they hardly have enough time to spend together. I heard the story of a midwestern farmer. One night he and his wife went to bed and a tornado hit their house. It ripped the roof off their house and sucked the wife and husband in their bed right up in the tornado. The wife started to cry. The husband said, "Honey, this is no time to be crying." She answered, "I can't help it. It's the first time we've been out alone together in 25 years." If you're going to love your wife affectionately, don't wait for a tornado to rip you out of the house to get away. One guy said, "I take my wife out to eat quite often, and sometimes we even go inside the restaurant rather than go through the drive-thru." I know it's a challenge for guys, but

we need to spend time with our wives. So, guard your words, your actions, and make sure you spend time together to love her affectionately.

Verse 25, we love our wives sacrificially; we love them sanctifyingly, verses 26-27; we love them affectionately as we take care of our own bodies; and notice verse 31, fourthly, we love them exclusively. In verse 31, Paul quotes from Genesis 2:24. It says, "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," so leave, join, the book of Genesis says cleave to your wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Those are the foundations for marriage. This verse is also quoted by Jesus in Matthew 19. If you need to, you should look that up and check out what Jesus had to say about making "...them male and female...and shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh," and Jesus adds this commentary, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Behind these verses, I see the idea of exclusivity.

Write down 1 Timothy 3:2. What we have in that verse are the qualifications for spiritual leaders in the church, technically, pastors. They're called bishops or elders or overseers. In 1 Timothy 3:2, it says they are to be "...the husband of one wife," that's the English translation. The phrase literally means a one-woman man. I believe the same thing holds true for every married man. He is to be devoted to, committed to, faithful to, have eyes only for his wife and no one else. He's to be a one-woman man devoted to his wife. That is so very, very important. The foundation of that is that you leave your father and mother, no one comes between you and your wife. Your wife is more important than your mother, than her mother, than your father, than her father. We love our parents, respect our parents, we try to take care of our parents, but we do not let them come between the relationship of a husband and a wife.

We're to love our spouses exclusively, and you're joined, which speaks of permanence. "Leave" speaks of severance and being devoted exclusively to your spouse, and "joined" speaks of permanence—you're glued permanently together as Jesus said, "...let not man put asunder," and only "...because of the hardness of your hearts," did Moses allow you "...to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so," it wasn't God's plan. "One flesh" speaks of intimacy, so severance, permanence, and intimacy. We are body, soul, and spirit; and a Christian marriage, a Spirit-filled marriage, a biblical marriage has that relationship on all three levels: Body-physical, soul-the mind and the emotions, and the spirit where you're both believers in Christ, sharing and drinking of the same Spirit of God.

Here's the summary to wrap it up, verses 32-33. Paul quotes verse 31 from Genesis 2, leave, cleave, and become one flesh, then he says, "This is a great mystery," that's why this passage introduces us to the mystery of marriage, and he describes what he means by a "mystery," "but I speak concerning Christ and the church," so marriage is a picture of the relationship and the union and the oneness between Christ and His church. This is why it is so horrific, so dishonoring to God, so wicked to try to reshape or redefine the marriage relationship. It is a divine institution. Any attack on marriage is an attack on the nature of God Himself and the character of God and Christ. It's an attack on God Himself and the relationship between Christ and the church.

Our marriages are to actually be a witness to the watching world of the relationship between Christ and the church. Spirit-filled marriages are to be a witness to the unbelieving world. They are to be lights in the dark place. They certainly impact our children, and our children's children, and they're the foundation for society. It's so sad and tragic that not only is marriage being destroyed in our world today, but even in the church as the world has crept into the church and we've neglected God's pattern and picture for marriage, marriages are dissolving at a very high rate even in the church, which ought not to be the case. We are to love one another, we're to be devoted to one another, and we're to do it as a picture of Christ and His relationship to the church. This is the mystery of marriage.

Notice, in closing, verse 33. "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular," this is Paul's summary, "so love his wife," speaking to husbands, "even as himself; and the wife see that she," respects, "reverence her husband." The word "reverence" in the King James Bible would probably be better rendered respects her husband. We have the mystery of marriage and the summation of marriage: Husbands loving their wives and wives respecting their husbands.

What can I do, in closing, to have a happy marriage? Let me give you some bullet points:

Make sure that you're a Christian. Do you want to have a blessed, happy, and successful marriage? You need to know Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior. If you are not a Christian, I haven't even really gone there, I believe that you are violating God's Word asking for trouble to marry a non-Christian. If that person doesn't love the Lord, isn't submitted to the Lord, doesn't know the Lord and have the Lord in his/her heart, it's a very, very unbiblical, foolish, disobedient thing to do, that is, to marry someone who is not a believer. Make sure that you're a Christian, that you've been born again.

If you need to, ask God to forgive you for how you've treated your wife or how you respond to your husband, 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," so husbands and wives asking God to forgive them. Ask your spouse to forgive you. We got that in Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," so we need to ask God to forgive us and then ask our spouse to forgive us.

Then, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18. Ask God, "Fill me with Your Holy Spirit," and then, Ephesians 5:21, we obey the Scriptures, the Word of God. These are all steps to having a happy marriage—obeying God's Word. Notice that in the Scriptures the Spirit of God and the Word of God work together. They're the dynamic duo, so reading the Word, obeying the Word as you surrender to the Holy Spirit.

In closing, husbands love your wives, and wives respect your husbands. We've covered a lot of verses and drawn from other places in the Bible, but we haven't even scratched the surface on what the Scriptures have to say about marriage. The best way to benefit in your marriage is to put God first in your life, to seek the Lord, to surrender to the Lord, and to be obedient to the Lord. You will reap the benefits and the blessings. Amen? Let's pray.