Husbands Love Your Wives like Christ

Ephesians 5:21-33

I don’t know why I’m up here, we haven’t been married as long as many here who could give much better advice about marriage, but I can say we are very happy and serving God around the clock. I can do this because Sharon supports me 100% I have never met a woman like her—I didn’t know such women existed, she makes me want to love her everyday the best I can. I didn’t want her to submit to me as the head of our family, because we’re brainwashed into feminism in American elementary school. But she insisted that I lead and she help and support which was very humbling for me. As M. David said, I had to ask myself, “am I a good head? Am I really leading the way God wants?” It made me repent a lot without her saying a word, her submission made me constantly want to be a better man. A wife’s submission makes a man get on his knees and become a leader for his family.

Verse 25 says, “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church.” The word “love” here is *agape* not *eros*. We hear “love your wife” and think “oh that’s easy, I’ve seen a bunch of romantic comedies, I’m an expert, chivalrous, modern man—I can even cook—I can love my wife.” But we are not asked to romantically love our wives—though that is certainly necessary in marriage—we are called to *agape* them. That is to love them with God’s love. God said to us, “I want you to be with me forever, and no matter what you do, I will never stop loving you, I will never leave you, I passionately gave my life to buy you and you are mine.” When he made us his, he stopped recording our wrongs and in everything all the time he only works for our good, until we are each overwhelmed with his love.

THAT is how we are called to love our wives: to overwhelm her with an unconditional one-sided love that always pursues her good. Who can love like that? No one, in their flesh. 1 John teaches that *agape* love must be given to us by God and is therefore a sign that we are a Christian. Then the first step of being the husband that God created me to be is to focus on my relationship with God above my relationship with Sharon. I found that keeping up with Bible study and prayer is essential or I’m a really a lousy, selfish, irritable husband.

One thing that has guided me is to remember that my wife and son are a trust from God for a time and I must take care of them the way HE wants me to take care of HIS daughter and son. If I’m trying to love God first, then it doesn’t matter what Sharon looks like or how she acts, loving her is my act of worship and obedience to God—luckily for me it’s really easy because Sharon is the most beautiful and friendly person I’ve ever met.

Practically, Christ expressed his love by laying down his life for the church. In the same way I must lay down my life for Sharon. It meant that I had to learn to put myself last and put her first. As an only child a man, naturally I’m selfish so it wasn’t easy. I thought I’m pretty good because I cook, clean, and work but laying down my life meant I needed to stop watching movies every other night, wasting time on the internet and playing games. I’ll tell you it didn’t happen naturally, or overnight but I was indulging in too much entertainment because I was not taking my role as a leader for our family. As I began to do what I was supposed to be doing I found I did not have any time for those things any more. It is also a check for me as the head. I cannot really abuse my leadership as a husband if I’m trying to put my wife before me in all things.

Christ also expressed his love for the church by washing her in the word until she was radiant, holy and blameless. Since I am called to love my wife like Christ, then I am responsible for Sharon’s spiritual growth. How easy it would be to say, “your spiritual life is yours and mine is mine and we need to each seek God **individually**,” or “it is the job of the **church** to provide a Bible teacher for you and they can help you to grow.” You know that any time jurisdiction over a local matter is given to a higher government body, it’s always done less efficiently. The same holds true for the family, we cannot give jurisdiction of our family over to the larger body of the church and say “it’s your responsibility to grow my wife and children.” There is no one on this earth who knows my wife better than me, then there is no one better than me to help her grow—and vice versus! At first, I thought Sharon should have a Bible teacher and she did a great job, no doubt, but I always felt that somehow I was being robbed of a great privilege. When I began to study with her our time of Bible study was so sweet. Though I have to admit, I tried to teach her the Bible at first because I though I have more knowledge…I don’t recommend this.

When we didn’t have enough messengers for the CBF Summer Bible Conference this year, Sharon said to me “I can be a messenger if you need,” which was surprising to me because she likes to work in the background and gets self-conscious about her writing but it was truly a decision of faith and I was really proud of her. I had trained many people in the process of writing and delivering messages for CBF, we know it’s really essential training to grow as a Bible teacher. But I never imagined how rewarding it would be to really shepherd my own wife in this way. She really struggled with God’s word and I could help her to deepen her Bible study and communication. In the end she delivered the best message—sorry to the other messengers, I’m a little biased.

Through this I really realized where my weakness lies in my marriage. Verses 28-29 say that I am to love my wife as I love myself caring for her and feeding her. These past 6 months I undertook a study of Romans reading through the 900 page MacArthur Commentary because I felt I needed to grow in my understanding of God’s grace and eternal security. It was incredibly rewarding. Where I saw I was weak in my faith, I made a plan and followed through with it so that I could grow. But do I have such an understanding of Sharon’s weakness and a plan for how I can cover it and help her to grow?

Sharon and I are no longer individuals living our own individual lives but she is part of me, and I must feed her and take care of her like Christ takes care of the church—that means everything. I need to ask myself “is Sharon radiant?” if she looks tired, thirsty and dry, it is MY responsibility to supply what is lacking. I must have a plan and prayer topic for my family and truly lead, not just support. I pray for myself and all men that we may be leaders as God made us to be, not giving the job to someone else or avoiding it, but doing the mission that God gave us.