

(Ephesians) Christ: The Husband's Role Model

by Brian Brodersen

The husband's role in the marriage relationship is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and to prioritize her needs above his own.

Duration: 51:46

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, Ephesians 5:25

Topics: "Marriage Counseling", "Servant Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of communication and companionship in marriage. They highlight the need for couples to listen to and pay attention to one another, fostering a deeper relationship and love for each other. The speaker also addresses the temptation to look elsewhere and offers guidance on resisting it by having a deep commitment to Jesus Christ and relying on His strength. They emphasize the importance of following the model of servant leadership demonstrated by Jesus and the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to bear the fruit of love. The sermon also acknowledges the challenges and attacks that marriages face, including the temptation to become bitter or negligent, and encourages couples to depend on the Lord and remain committed to their marriage.

Transcript

Let's turn to Ephesians tonight, chapter 5. So we continue our study in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians and our series within the series as we are presently speaking on the subject of marriage and family. We come this evening to a subject of the husband's role. We looked at in our first study in the series, we looked at God in marriage last week.

We looked at the wife's role in the marriage and this evening we come to the role of the husband. So let me read to you once again, Ephesians 5, 22 through 33. Wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord for the husband is head of the wife is also Christ is head of the church and he is the savior of the body.

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands and everything. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular, so love his wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband. So we come to the husband's role in the marriage relationship.

I believe the husband in many ways holds the key to the marriage relationship. Granted, it takes two to have a good marriage, but the primary responsibility for the marriage is on the husband's shoulder in the marital counseling that I've done over the years. Not all, but the majority of problems in marriages are traced back to the failure of the husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church.

Now, as we've been discussing the subject of marriage, we see that with God, marriage is a very serious matter. And God is calling men to take marriage seriously. A tragic statistic is that women are generally more serious about marriage than men.

Eighty percent of the books purchased on the subject of marriage are purchased by women. Whenever there is a problem within the marriage, generally speaking, the women are the first to seek help. This shouldn't be the case.

How is it that men are so negligent in their responsibility when their responsibility is clearly set forth as the primary responsibility in the marriage? Now, the husband, according to the text that we looked at tonight, and we're concentrating on verse 25, husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her. What we see from this is that the husband is to be the initiator in the marital relationship and the wife is to be the responder. For the husband's model is Christ, and Christ is the one who initiated the relationship with the church.

We simply responded to the love of Christ, but he initiated. He's the one who made the advance toward us, not the other way around. And so Christ becomes the model for the man.

The man is to emulate what Christ does. Now, here in our text, we are not only told what to do, but Christ is set forth as an example that we can follow. So Paul, first of all, admonishes us to love our wives, and then he gives us sort of a visual aid.

He says, as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. And so we want to break down this 25th verse tonight, beginning with the first part of it, husbands love your wives. Now, this word love is the Greek word agape.

This is the word that is used most frequently in the New Testament for love. And this is the word that speaks of a love that springs from the preciousness of the object loved. This, of course, is the love that God has for man.

This is the love that God has for the world. For God so loved the world. It's that highest sort of love that the apostle is calling the husband to have toward his wife.

It's a love that gives without expectation of receiving something in return. A love that gives without expectation of receiving something in return. So often we're not really loving because what we're doing,

we are doing with the expectation of receiving something in return.

And those things can be hidden very deeply within our hearts. But yet, if we search down deep enough, we find that our motives aren't really pure. In our relationships with one another, so often, this love is a love that is centered in others rather than in self.

And it's a love that was demonstrated by Christ when he came. Now, something that's important to realize about this love is that this love is not a feeling. This love that we're describing here is really an act of the will.

And oftentimes in our relationships with one another, we really stumble because we think of love as a feeling. And so we conclude, perhaps, that we're no longer in love with the person because we don't have the same feelings that we might have had 15 years ago when we got engaged or, you know, when we first were married. And many times today, people are coming and saying, well, I'm no longer in love or I've fallen out of love.

But the moment a person says that, you realize they don't understand what love is in the first place because love is not a feeling. Now, going back to God as the one who demonstrates this love so perfectly, when God looks at the world, do you think that God has some feeling of, oh, I just love them so much? Look at those wicked sinners, how they're rebelling against me. Oh, I love that.

There's not some feeling involved in that. It's just an act of his will. He chooses to love despite the fact that the world is in rebellion to him.

And so when we're talking about loving as Christ love, when we're talking about the love that the husband is to have to the wife, we're not talking about a feeling. We're talking about a commitment. Jesus was driven by his love for us to the cross, but I guarantee that had you asked him in the Garden of Gethsemane how he felt about all of this, he didn't have a real good feeling.

But he wasn't basing what he was doing on his feeling, he was basing it on a commitment. It was an act of the will. And that is so important when we think of the love that we're to have for our wives as husbands.

It's a love based on commitment. It's a decision that we make to love following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now Paul in two different places in the New Testament.

He gives a definition of this word agape. And in a previous study, we looked at the definition given in 1st Corinthians 13. And so tonight we want to look at another definition that Paul gave and that's found in Galatians chapter 5 verses 22 and 23.

Now listen to what Paul says. He says, but the fruit of the Spirit is love. Now, I want you to notice he doesn't say the fruits of the Spirit are love and then a number of other things.

He says the fruit singular of the Spirit is love. So what that means is that the remainder of the 22nd verse and the first portion of the 23rd verse are now a description of that love that is the fruit of the Spirit. And so this is the kind of love that we're talking about.

This is how this love is demonstrated or displayed. This love that we are to have as husbands toward our wives, but the fruit of the Spirit is love and that love is a joyous love. It's a love that's marked by joy.

There's joy in the relationship. It's not a burdensome sort of a love, but it's a joyous love. There's a delightful aspect to it.

It's a peaceful love. It's a love that demonstrates itself in our dwelling peacefully together. It's a love that's long-suffering.

A love that's patient. A love that's not easily irritated or provoked. It's a love that's kind.

It's a love that's manifested in goodness. It's a love that's faithful. There's that commitment.

It's a love that's gentle and it's a love that has self-control. This is the love. Husbands love your wives.

With that agape love, that love that God has for us. That love that's so beautifully defined here in this verse. Now, he says husbands love your wives as Christ.

Love the church. If we look at the whole picture of the redemptive work of Jesus from beginning to end, we see a number of manifestations of the love of Christ. Beginning with the incarnation.

Jesus Christ in displaying his love for us. Jesus. He left everything.

He left everything. He gave up everything in order to save us. That he did as an act of love.

And so when I'm called to love my wife as Christ, love the church. I must ask myself the question. Have I left everything behind? Have I, in other words, made my wife the priority in my life? You know, as a Christian man, your wife is to be your highest priority next to your relationship with the Lord.

That is the order in the scripture. God is always, of course, to be our first priority. But our second priority is to be our wives.

So the question is, when I consider how Christ loved the church by leaving everything, have I left everything behind for my wife? Have I made her a priority in my life? You know, a lot of times problems exist in marriage because of a failure to do that. The husband hasn't really made the wife a priority. Sometimes the husband is still holding on to family ties.

Still being controlled and manipulated to some extent by family relationships. Maybe a domineering mother or a sibling who is, you know, constantly meddling or, you know, wanting to interfere in the marriage. And the husband has this sort of, you know, loyalty to the family that he kind of keeps getting influenced by them.

And in doing so, he's not really loving his wife in the sense that he's supposed to. Remember, the scripture says that a man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. And there are those times when, if we fail in that area, that can bring great difficulty into the marriage.

And then there are those other relationships that come in. Some men hang on to their childhood relationships, their old buddies, their friends. And, you know, they want to spend more time with the boys than they do with their wife.

They want to spend more time hanging out with the guys and just being one of the guys and having a good old time. Then they want to be with their wives and take the responsibility. Now, sometimes when you're young, you know, you have a lot of misconceptions about those kinds of things.

And that's understandable when you're young, but it's important that we grow up and grow out of these things. I see a lot of 40, 50 year old men today running around, still acting like kids. Hanging out with the gang.

When I first got married, I must confess, I was 23 at the time. So I can't be totally faulted, I guess. But I, you know, I wasn't quite aware of the kind of commitment that I was being called to and the kind of commitment that I was entering into.

And I sort of was thinking that Cheryl was just going to become, you know, just another buddy, you know, and we'd just hang out. And I found out real quickly, she wasn't into hanging out. I thought, well, honey, you know, don't you want to just sit down on the beach and watch me surf all day? Doesn't that sound fun to you? And I'll go out with the boys and we'll surf for a few hours and you can just watch.

That didn't last long at all. But there are some who fail in this area. They don't give up the friends.

They allow friends to come in and interfere with the relationship. And in some cases, there are men that are still holding on not to childhood friends only, but childish pursuits. And still involved in all of the things that they were involved in, you know, as kids.

To the neglect of the family. Involved in all the different sports and, you know, one sport comes for a season and you're involved in that and then that season's over and you jump right into something else and all of this. And there the wife is at home just wondering, you know, what is this? She thought she was getting a husband.

She was actually getting a lifetime babysitting project. And that is something that quite often occurs in marriages today. So as we're loving our wives as Christ loved the church, we have to remember as we look at Christ.

We see the first thing he did is he left everything. He gave up everything. The church became his priority.

When Jesus came into the world, he had one mission, one goal, one purpose, and that was the redemption of the church. The redemption of a people for himself. Now, I'm not saying that as a man or a godly husband, you can't have any hobbies or sport involvement or any of that sort of thing.

But obviously that cannot be the priority. And one must be sensitive to the wife's needs in making decisions about being involved in those kinds of things. Secondly, we see that Jesus was a servant.

Jesus Christ was a servant to the church. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. You remember Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

He took the role of a servant. We read in Philippians 2 that he humbled himself and he was found in fashion as a man and he became like a servant. And in loving our wives as Christ loved the church, that means that we're to be serving our wives.

Many men look at their wives as slaves. But in the Christian community and according to the teaching of the New Testament, if there's a slave in the house, it's to be the man. The man is to be the servant of all because Christ came as a servant and we're to emulate the Lord Jesus Christ.

So in your marriage, are you thinking of your wife as your slave or do you think of you as your wife's servant? You're there to minister to her. You see, Jesus, he just flipped everything up on its head. He that

would be the greatest among you, let him be the slave of all, he said.

Now out in the world, Jesus acknowledged that those who are esteemed as great, they're the ones with all the power. They're the ones that are ruling over others, but it is not to be the case with you. And then he pointed to himself as an example.

I am among you as one who serves. And so we are to follow his example in that he is a servant and we are to seek to serve one another. As husbands, we are to look for opportunities to serve our wives.

Rather than having that expectation of the wife serving me, I need to look for opportunities to serve my wife. Now, when we were younger and raising children, I came to the conclusion that as much as I hated to admit it, my wife's job was much harder than mine. Being with those kids all day long, taking care of their every need and at the same time, you know, trying to maintain the household, trying to prepare the meals, trying to make sure that I was going to be happy when I got home, you know, it wasn't too long before I realized I didn't want to tell her, but I was seeing it.

Boy, she didn't get a good deal here, you know, I've really got it made. But as that was dawning on me just through observation, the Lord was speaking to me at the same time saying, yes, that is the case and therefore you need to be a servant to her. But I think a lot of times as men, because we're more influenced by culture, we're more influenced by tradition, this is the way our dads did it, this is what we saw in our own homes or whatever the case, we go in with this mentality and we live with this mentality, but this is not a biblical picture.

And if you were brought up with a model that's something other than the model that Jesus set forth in the scriptures, you've got to throw it out and you've got to get the scripture as your guideline for your relationship with your wife. And that means that you are to become a servant to her. And you are to seek to relieve her of burdens and things like that rather than heaping those things upon her.

Many women struggle under the burden that the husband has placed upon them to live up to, you know, some sort of a standard. Maybe because your father was a domineering individual, your mother lived under that tyranny. And so you're thinking, well, that's my wife supposed to do what my mom did.

Which was virtually everything. But that's not the way it's supposed to be. We're not to go, you know, around the house flinging our dirty clothes anywhere we want and expecting the wife to pick them up.

Eating dinner and leaving the dishes there, expecting her to, you know, just jump up and take care of that now after she's worked hard to make the dinner. But those kinds of things, as I said, they come over, they're passed on from generation to generation. But when we come to Christ, Jesus breaks these things.

He wants to break these things in our lives. We're to love our wives as Christ loved the church and he was a servant. And then thirdly, we are to seek to relieve burdens rather than place burdens upon our wives.

Relieving their burdens emotionally as well as physically. We read concerning Jesus that he took our burdens. And remember he said, come to me all you that are weary and are heavy laden.

I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. He said, for my yoke is easy.

My burden is light. For you, it shouldn't be a massive burden for your wife to be your wife. It should be a delightful thing.

It should be a pleasurable thing. And that will be the case if we follow the example of Christ and we seek to relieve them of burdens if we're compassionate and sensitive toward them. Now, we all fail in these areas at times.

I'm not standing up here as a person who's carried this out perfectly. I failed in this in many different situations. But yet, this is what we're striving for.

This is what we're seeking to arrive at because this is the picture that we've been left by Christ and his example. You know, I have learned things the hard way sometimes. Unfortunately, at my wife's expense.

Just recently, we had a situation where, you know, I could have. My wife was under a heavy burden and I could have, with just a couple of words, lifted that burden from off of her, made her life easy, pleasant, joyful. But I chose foolishly not to do that.

Because at the moment, I was more concerned with my particular problem than with her problem. It was a day when I was preparing to teach and, you know, sometimes when you're preparing to teach the Bible, there's this thing called spiritual warfare that occurs and you're kind of under it. You just kind of sense, you know, that there's somebody who's not really keen on what you're doing.

And there's this invisible sort of opposition you just feel. And I was feeling that really bad. So I just had to get out of the house and go for a long walk.

And I did that and it didn't seem to be changing the situation any. And on my walk, I get a call from my wife. And she starts pouring out her heart to me and laying her burden on me and telling me all that she's going through.

And I'm thinking, wait a minute. It's my day to have the burden. I'm the one who's under attack here, not you.

I'm, you know, I'm the one that's going to be teaching. And so instead of being sensitive and instead of saying things that would lift the burden off of her, as she was telling me how she was feeling kind of like a failure in this area. Well, I just suggested that she ought to be feeling that way.

Because I have noticed lately and I went on this tirade, you know, and began to tell her all the things that I thought about this. And I will tell you, God help me for the rest of my life never to do that again. Because that set in motion a chain reaction that led to a couple of days of absolute hell on earth in our home.

And I take full responsibility for it. And I remember the very moment because we're on the phone and she's crying out and she's looking for compassion. She's looking to have her burden alleviated.

And I know that I can do that. But I decide, no, I'm not going to do that because right now I'm going to think about me. And I chose at that instant not to do what I'm supposed to do as a husband, not to love her as Christ loved the church.

But instead to concentrate on myself and my problem and, oh boy, I'll tell you, it was miserable. And I hope and pray I never do that again. But we can easily do that.

And I can look back over the years of our marriage and I could see so many times where I have caused an explosion in the home just because I haven't been sensitive. I haven't been sensitive. I haven't been compassionate.

I haven't been loving. I haven't thought of my wife as the weaker vessel. Now, I've concluded and I'm just going to be honest.

My wife is, she is the hub of the family. I mean, everything really revolves around her. You know, Cheryl speaks a lot.

She's sought after as a Bible teacher. So she gets these invitations to go and I absolutely hate to let her go because the whole house falls apart when she leaves. Now, I tell her, look, honey, I'll travel around the world.

You stay home and take care of business here because, you know, when I travel, I come back and everything's just fine. When you travel, you come back and we got to rebuild the whole family again. You know, it's a mess.

But as I look at, you know, the years that we've spent together, I see so many times where had I followed the example of Jesus and sought to alleviate her burden and been compassionate and sensitive, oh, we could have avoided so many difficulties. But this is what I'm to concentrate on as a husband. I think it would probably be a good idea for us husbands to read over these passages on a regular basis and to just sort of ask the Lord to check us in areas where we might be lacking.

Are we really loving as is described in the scriptures? Are we loving as Christ loved the church? Now, Paul then in that verse, he goes a step further and he says, husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church. And now he gives that prime example of giving himself for her. Jesus gave himself entirely, completely.

He gave his life for the church. Now, by nature, I am more of a taker than a giver. That's my natural bent.

And I think it's probably the natural bent of most men. You find rare exceptions to the rule, but most men are more oriented toward taking than giving. Now, you see, this is where we really need to be broken.

This is where we really have to have the power of the Spirit operating in our lives because it goes against the grain of my nature to be a giver. But Christ gave. And so if I'm going to follow the example of Christ, I have got to likewise become a giver rather than a taker in the relationship.

I have got to ask the question, what can I give into this relationship? I've got to constantly be looking for opportunities to give of myself to my wife. Now, you see, here's the wonderful thing about this, and we don't do it for these reasons, but this is really the outcome of it. When we do this, it really makes for a beautiful experience together as husband and wife.

We talked last week about the wife submitting to the husband. And although there are those occasions when there are women who are just flat-out rebellious to that idea, most of the time, the struggle of submission has to do with the failure of the husband to really love. Now, we have already pointed out that that's not an excuse not to submit.

You have to trust God to deal with your husband. But speaking just to the husbands, if we would but love our wives as we're supposed to, then we wouldn't really be struggling with this additional problem of the submission matter. And I know in my experience, and not only as a husband, but as a pastor and as a counselor for many years, you know, just loving your wife goes so far to make things so smooth and wonderful and beautiful in the marriage relationship.

My wife is a really easy person to please if I've covered this one major base, if she knows I love her, if she senses I love her, if she can sense from me that concern, that sensitivity, that compassion, the fact that I want to give myself for her, even if I'm not necessarily working it out into practical things, but yet she knows that that's my heart and that's my desire, it just takes away any of that friction that might be there. In giving, there are things that we should specifically concentrate on giving. And I think one of the most important is giving of our time, giving of our time.

Your wife married you because she wanted to spend time with you, and you probably married her for the same reason. But as time goes on, we get away from those things that we once were excited about in the early days, don't we? But we shouldn't do that. We should strive not to do that.

And one of the ways that we can prevent that from happening is by giving time to one another. Doing things and going places with your wife that she enjoys doing, or places she desires to go, those kinds of things. You know, just giving her that option of, you know, what do you want to do? I just want to spend time with you.

When we were young in our marriage, I was not good at so many of these things, and still holding on to childish things. And whenever I had a free moment, I wanted to go fulfill my own lust, and I wanted to be out in the water surfing. I grew up doing that, and it was just something that I held on to for so long.

And I would do everything in my power to get my way to be able to go do that. I would, first of all, just ask, and I could sense that that wasn't really what my wife wanted to do. And then I would start the process of manipulating in order to get her to finally say, oh, just get out of here and go.

So then I could say, well, you told me to go. Well, I drove her to the point of telling me to go. It was obvious that that's what I wanted to do.

But that's not the kind of love that Christ had. Christ had a love that gave of his time. And as we look at Jesus again in the pages of the New Testament, what did Jesus spend his life doing when he was here? He, you're looking at the church as the bride of Christ.

He spent his life with the bride. That's what he was doing when he was here. He wasn't off pursuing his own, you know, his own life.

Thing, whatever it might have been or could have been. But he had one thing that he was committed to doing, and that was the preparation and redemption of his bride and so forth. And so we need to give time to our wives.

We need to give attention. You know, you can be in the same room with somebody and not give them any attention. You can take a nice long drive up the coast or something with your wife and not give her any attention.

You just pop in a CD or something, turn it up full blast, and there you go. You're in the same car, but you're not, there's no communication going on. There's no listening.

There's no conversation. There's no relationship. As we talked about in our first study on marriage, the primary purpose that God has brought people together is for companionship.

And in giving, we need to give attention to one another, listening to one another, communicating, and we ought to be, ideally, growing deeper and deeper in our relationship with one another, in our love for one another, as we get older in the Lord. When we're young in life and young in the Lord, we're going to have some of those foolish things that are still a part of our lives because of immaturity and all, but hopefully as time goes on, we're growing beyond these things. We're growing out of these things.

But we've got to put forth an effort. We've got to take these things into consideration, and we've got to seek to put them into practice. So when we read that Christ loved the church and he gave himself for it, and husbands are to love their wives in the same way, we've got to think through the life of Jesus, as we're doing right here, and look at what he did and say, okay, Lord, how do I now do this for my wife? Then finally, when it comes to giving ourselves, Christ gave his life entirely, and we are to give our lives, too.

You cannot give your life to your wife and to some other woman at the same time. How miserably a man fails when he gives himself physically to someone other than his wife, and God forbid that any Christian man should do that. And an utter and complete failure to love as Christ loved.

If we love as Christ loved, we give ourselves entirely. And even though we're living in a day when marriage is no longer seen as something all that special or important, and the commitment level is decreased tremendously, if we are naming the name of Christ, then we have to remember that when we said those vows before God and those witnesses, God is holding us to those things, and he expects us to be faithful. And when we give ourselves to our wives, we're giving ourselves to them entirely and solely for the rest of our lives.

I was with a couple this week. They've been married 42 years, got married when they were 18 years old. She's dying of cancer.

And to be with them and just to watch them and to watch the husband loving his wife and taking care of her right down to the very end. And to see her full of faith and full of excitement about going to be with Christ, but yet also deeply concerned for her husband. How's he going to do without her? They've been together for so long.

And him at, you know, one in the same time, thrilled for his wife's entrance into glory, but yet, how's he going to live without his partner of 42 years? And, you know, as I was there with them and looking at this situation, I just thought how beautiful that is. That's the way it's supposed to be. Loving, being faithful, committed all the way to the end.

Christ gave himself. We are to give ourselves entirely. Now, as we look at this, we realize, men, don't we, that this is this is really a high standard.

To love my wife as Christ loved the church. Oh, how can I do that? Well, it's obvious I can't do it on my own. I can't do it by just mustering up my own personal strength and saying, I'm going to do this regardless.

I've got to have additional help and assistance. I've got to have the power of God operating in my life. And what it comes down to is I cannot really fulfill this command unless I myself am in that vital relationship with the Lord Jesus.

And once again, this is where we see the initial failure in marriage take place. It's when a person slackens in their commitment to Christ. It's when they they lose the depth of that commitment.

You can't lose that. You've got to maintain that. You've got to hold on to that because it's through that vital connection with Jesus Christ that you're given the supernatural power to love.

With this high call to love that God has given. We have got to be depending on the Lord. Now, remember the fruit of the spirit is love.

If you're struggling with love, it's because you're not full of the spirit. And if you're not full of the spirit, it's because you're not abiding in the vine. Because when a branch abides in the vine, it brings forth fruit and the fruit of the spirit is love.

If you're struggling with love, not feeling love, remember that that's not what we're talking about, but struggling with that commitment. What do you do? Marriage is under attack. You know, it's under attack.

You've experienced that attack. We've all experienced temptation to become bitter. We've all experienced temptation to become negligent.

We've all experienced a temptation to look somewhere else. What do we do about that? How do we deal with that? How do we resist that and stand strong in the face of that? We've got to have that deep commitment to Jesus Christ and be calling upon him consistently and asking him, Lord, give me the strength. Give me all that I need to fulfill your command to love as you love.

We can't do it on our own, but the Lord is there to assist us as we draw up on his strength and as we abide in him. In the church today, marriages are falling apart at about the same rate as they're falling apart outside the church, and that shows that there's something drastically the matter. And I think the problem goes back to personal commitment, but then it's also the problem of failing to take the word of God seriously and to seek to obey explicitly what it commands us to do.

You see, there are a few things in life that are really, really important. Most of life is filled with trivialities that don't really matter a whole lot, but we've always got to measure everything in light of eternity. And in light of eternity, there are a few crucial matters.

Obviously, the most crucial is your relationship with God. Secondly, it's the relationship with your family. It's the relationship with your wife as a man.

It's the relationship with your husband as a woman. It's the relationship as parents with your children. Those are the things that are of vital importance.

Those are the things that eternity is made of. And these are the things that we need to be giving ourselves to with a full and complete commitment. There are a lot of things that you can do half-heartedly and get by with it.

But you can't do this half-heartedly and get by with it. The powers that be are too strong in opposing. And if you're not giving your self entirely to these things, you'll get swept away.

Swallowed up by the opposition. This is something that we're called to give ourselves entirely to and is something worth giving ourselves for entirely. It's something worth it.

There's something absolutely glorious and wonderfully powerful about a godly marriage. A godly family. There's something extremely powerful about that.

There's something glorious about it. As I've been back here in Orange County after being gone for almost 18 years, I'm having the opportunity to meet over and over again old friends, people that I grew up with, went to school with. And one of the things that's blowing their minds as we talk is that I'm going on my 22nd year of marriage.

And many of them are already gone through a couple of marriages. And they're wondering, wow, how? How'd you do that? You know, how could you have stuck it out? And it's such a thrill to be able to take that relationship and to use it as a basis to share, you know, God is good and he blesses marriage and he's able to keep you together and do wonderful things. Through you.

And for Cheryl and I, I speak for just us, but I know many others as well and their testimonies. But, you know, it's, I look at all the years we've been together and I think of all the stupid things I've done over the years and how God has been faithful to, you know, just keep us together with one another. And I look now and I think as exciting and fun and everything as it was in those early days of marriage, it's just getting better all the time.

It's getting more exciting. It's getting more thrilling. We know each other pretty well now after 22 years.

And we see that God brought us together as a team, not just, you know, to love each other and know each other and serve each other. But he brought us together as a team to serve him. And that's a thrilling thing.

That's an exciting thing. But I can't have that confidence or that victory in service to him if I'm not loving my wife as Christ loves the church. And if she's not submitting to me as unto the Lord, it doesn't work.

But as we take these basic commands and as we commit ourselves to them, we find that there is the blessing of God. And there's that enjoyable experience that God had in mind when he brought the marriage relationship into existence. And there's that blessed experience also of partnership in ministry.

God wants to do that in all of our lives as husbands and wives. And men, you hold the key. You hold the key to a God-glorifying marriage.

It begins with you following the model of Jesus Christ. That model of servant leadership, you serve and your wife will gladly follow. And you will know God's blessing in your home.

You'll know God's blessing in all of your activity. And you'll know God's blessing in that relationship that just gets better and better as time goes on. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you that through your word and the power of your spirit, you've given us everything we need to live God-glorifying lives in our marriage. And Lord, help us and help us as husbands tonight, Lord. I pray for each husband here tonight.

Each husband that's listening to this message from wherever they're at. Lord, that each one of us would be fully committed as you were committed, Jesus. When you stepped down from your throne in heaven and came to this earth and gave yourself entirely that we would have that same commitment to our wives.

To love them, to fulfill that command. And Lord, as we do that, that you could in turn bless our homes, our children, our relations, and Lord, our ministries. And Lord, we pray tonight too for marriages that have suffered or are suffering presently because of a failure on the part of the husband.

Lord, cause men to repent. And Lord, may we remember that we are going to be held accountable for whether or not we obeyed you in this area. Help us, Lord, to take marriage as serious as you do and to put all of our energy into a marriage that will glorify you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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