

# (Ephesians) Husbands Love Your Wives

by Brian Brodersen

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*Husbands are called to love their wives as Christ loved the church, demonstrating love, sacrifice, and care in their relationships.*

**Duration:** 52:05

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:25

**Topics:** "Marriage Counseling", "Christian Accountability"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the true nature of God as revealed in the Bible. He highlights that God is not just a loving God, but also a God who can become angry and calls for obedience and truth. The speaker warns against abusing one's spouse, stating that God is watching and will hold individuals accountable for their actions. The sermon also touches on the topic of communication in marriage, with the speaker acknowledging his own shortcomings in this area and encouraging continuous growth and learning in relationships.

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## Transcript

Let's turn tonight to Ephesians 5. As we continue our study through Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, as well as our series within a series, Marriage and Family, looking tonight once again at the responsibility of the husband in the marital relationship. I want to read tonight verses 25 through 29. 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.

We come once again to a consideration of the husband's responsibility in the marriage relationship, remembering that the husband in many ways holds the key to the marriage relationship. We've seen that the love that the husband is to have to his wife is that deep sacrificial love like the love that Christ demonstrated toward us when he gave up his life for us on the cross. We come now to Paul's second appeal to husbands to love their wives.

And here in the second appeal, Paul takes a slightly different angle on it. And he says that husbands ought to love their wives as they love themselves. So first of all, setting forth Christ as the great example of

love and giving himself for us and now appealing to something that the husband would immediately identify with.

You know, as we think of the love of Christ and as we think of husbands loving our wives as Christ loved the church, that in some ways can, you know, almost sort of just go over our heads. You know, we can look at the picture of Christ in the New Testament and we can meditate on it. But the magnitude of it, the depth of it, to some extent might escape us.

We might, you know, after hearing such a command, be puzzled as to just how in the world I could ever do this. But now Paul brings it down to a place where we can really get a hold of the idea when he talks about husbands ought to love their wives as they love themselves. We can all go right to our own personal experience and draw from our own experiences and apply that.

Now, before we go to that, have you noticed that in the marriage relationship only the husband is instructed to love the wife? Now of course that doesn't mean that wives are not to love their husbands, but it's interesting to me that it's only the husband in scripture that is instructed to love his wife. Now, why is that? There are two reasons. Reason number one, the husband is following the example of Christ and his attitude toward the church is an attitude of love.

So Christ is our example. He's our role model as we've talked about before. And because Christ's primary attitude toward the church is an attitude of love, as we're following him, we're going to be then, of course, emulating him.

We're going to be loving as well. But secondly, I believe that husbands are instructed to love their wives because a wife's number one need is to be loved. That's the number one need of a wife, to be loved and actually to know that she is loved, to sense that she is loved.

Now I've got to be honest, in the 22 years that I've been married, I don't think I've spent a total of one minute doubting whether or not my wife loved me. I have been absolutely secure in her love for me. I've never thought twice about it.

Of course she loves me. Why not? You know, we're married. I assume that that's why she married me, because she loved me.

And I've just gone on assuming that she still does love me. And evidently she does. She's sticking with me and so forth.

But I've got to tell you, on the other hand, my poor wife, she spends so much of her time thinking that I don't love her. If I tell her her shirt's wrinkled, somehow that translates into, you don't really love me. If I tell her that I love Indian food more than Mexican food, that translates into I don't love her because she can't cook Indian food.

She can only cook Mexican food. And you know, it's amazing. And there are times when, you know, I'll say something that has nothing to do with anything, at least as far as the conclusions that she draws, and this whole thing will develop and we'll go in this direction and, you know, finally I'll just look at her and say, what is the problem? Well, I don't think you love me.

Why don't you think I love you? Because you know, I said or did something that had nothing whatsoever to do with that. But she somehow translates these things into a secret message that I'm seeking to send to

her that I really do not love her. And I can only speak, of course, from my own marital relationship, but I've done a lot of counseling over the years and compared notes, and it does seem to me that in a general sense, most women are the same, and I do think that we could build a case that the primary need of the woman is to be loved and to know that she's loved.

And so that's why we have the scriptures exhorting the husband to love his wife. And not only to love his wife, but I think underneath there is also the exhortation to communicate that love. Now it's possible to, you know, truly love your wife, but not necessarily communicate that, and that's something, men, that we need to get better at.

It's something that we need to work on many times. And once again, I went off the idea that my wife, you know, evidently she knows I love her. I married her.

I wouldn't have married her had I not loved her. So there would be times when I never thought that I needed to reaffirm that to her. But I found that that isn't the case at all.

I cannot assume that she knows that I love her, just like wives should never assume that we know what they're thinking. But that is an assumption that you often make, isn't it, wives? You think that we can read your minds, and therefore we should have done this or that and shouldn't have done this or that. But it works both ways because we quite often, as men, assume that our wives know that we love them, but we need to communicate that.

And so the scripture exhorts the husband to do that. Now, looking at Paul's second appeal here in verse 28, husbands, love your own wives as your own bodies. Now, self-love is a fact of human nature.

This is just a fact of human nature. It's not anything that is being condemned here. Paul is just acknowledging the fact of human nature that we love ourselves.

And there's no disputing that. There's no arguing with it. We do love ourselves.

And sometimes that's bad because we love ourselves more than we love God. And we love ourselves more than we love other people. And other times it's just, you know, the way we are because there is that built-in sense of self-preservation and things of that nature.

So Paul's not making a statement one way or the other about the issue of self-love. He's simply declaring the fact of self-love. And Paul is appealing to something that we can all identify with.

So, what he's saying is this. He's saying, men, we are to have the same concern, care, compassion, and love for our wives as we do for ourselves. We all have concern for ourselves, don't we? We all take care of ourselves.

We all have compassion and pity on ourselves when it's due to us and sometimes even not when it's due to us. And we certainly do love ourselves in the sense that we are committed to taking care of ourselves. We're committed to making sure we're fed and dressed and just taken care of.

And that's what Paul is getting at here when he says that the husband is to love his wife as his own body. Now practically speaking, how do we do this? How do we put this into practice? Well, first, let's look at the negatives, things that we should never do if we are loving our wives as Christ loved the church and loving them as ourselves. If we really are taking the Word of God seriously and applying these things, there are

certain things that we will never do, never, never, never do.

And if we are doing these things at all, then it's an indication that we are not loving our wives as Christ loved the church, we're not loving our wives as ourselves, we're not obeying God, and we are going to be held accountable for that. And we need to remember that right up front. Some of the things I hear that go on in Christian homes, some of the behavior that is displayed by husbands, I often wonder if people realize that there's a day of reckoning coming.

Have we completely forgotten that God is watching what we're doing? Have we forgotten that we're accountable to Him? Have we forgotten that we've been entrusted with certain things that really are not ours, but they're the Lord's? And that one day we're going to answer for how we treated those things, particularly our wives, our families, our children. And I think to some extent there has been a forgetting of those things by many in the church. And so things are going on that should never, ever go on in a Christian home.

And so that's what we want to begin with, the negatives. Negative, number one. Well, we should never, never, ever abuse our wives as husbands.

A sane man never intentionally abuses his body, therefore a man should under no circumstances ever abuse his wife, under no circumstances whatsoever. Of course, there are various types of abuse. When we talk about abuse, we think first and foremost of physical abuse.

In many ways, that could be the most harmful. There are, of course, severe damaging effects of other kinds of abuse as well. But physical abuse, I mean, it should be just something that would never even come into our minds that we should do such a thing as Christian men.

But yet, unfortunately, tragically, we hear all too often of so-called Christian men, men who come to church, men who carry a Bible, men who pray, men who claim to be Christians, we hear too often of them becoming physical with their wives. Under no circumstance at any time should a man ever lift his hand against his wife. A man should never shove his wife, he should never strike his wife, should never do anything physically that would be intentionally harmful to her.

And I want to emphasize that you've got to remember that this is God's property you're handling. This is God's child, and for you to be abusive to a child of God, this is going to come against you on that day. God is going to take this to account, and there's going to be a reckoning of it.

And I believe that because we've lost to some degree the fear of God in the church today, we don't think about things in those terms. But we have to understand that our wives are God's property, they're not ours to abuse or to mistreat in any way. And so under no circumstances whatsoever, it doesn't matter how irritated you've become, it doesn't matter even how antagonistic your wife might have been.

Sometimes women can upset a husband and seek to even provoke him. But nevertheless, under no circumstance should a man ever in any way physically abuse his wife. Secondly, there is the issue of emotional abuse.

And although emotional abuse won't put you in the hospital with a broken arm or a busted nose or a black eye or something like that, emotional abuse certainly can damage a person emotionally. And in some cases, can lead to hospitalization because of a breakdown in the emotional area. And no husband ought to ever in any way, shape or form emotionally abuse his wife.

What do I mean by emotional abuse? Well, mental manipulation, mind games. Some people are not abusive physically, but they're severely abusive emotionally. They play mind games all the time.

And I don't know why people do this. I don't know if it's out of fear or insecurity on their part. That's no excuse.

Or if it's out of just spite or bitterness or whatever. But, you know, people do play mental games. And they can cause great damage to a person through mental manipulation and mind games.

Flirtation is a manifestation of a mind game. You're, you know, just trying to keep your wife off balance. You know, you don't want her to get too secure in thinking that she's got you wrapped around her finger.

So you're sort of, you know, looking around at the other ladies. And then you're kind of hinting, you know, here and there that, oh, you know, she's good looking. Or maybe you're interested or something like that.

Those are all forms of emotional abuse. And there are a variety of other manipulative sort of things that can go on. And without going into detail, if you've been involved in that, you know what I'm talking about.

Verbal abuse is another serious issue. And perhaps even more prevalent than the others among Christians. Verbal abuse, yelling, screaming, using profane language toward your wife, name calling, those sorts of things.

You know, I mean, I almost feel embarrassed having to even talk about this stuff. Because it just seems so obvious that this kind of stuff should never, ever transpire in our homes. But tragically, it does.

These are the kinds of things that we deal with on a regular basis as people come in to see us each week. We deal with these sorts of things. A husband out of control and he's screaming at his wife all the time.

He's filled with rage and anger and, you know, the veins are there in his neck and he's shaking his fist. And what is that? And then he's coming into church on Sunday with his Bible. Some cases he's, you know, maybe ushering or maybe he's a deacon or something.

Or maybe he's, you know, going off to teach Sunday school or something like that. What a contradiction. These things should never be happening.

These kinds of things are unthinkable among Christian men. And if we're doing these things at all, then we are absolutely failing in God's instruction to love our wives as Christ loved the church, to love our wives as we love ourselves. We're absolutely failing.

And again, I remind you, God is watching. God is watching. And there is that moment of accountability.

And, you know, I think that to some extent we have misunderstood the grace of God. We've interpreted the grace of God to mean that, you know, God is just sort of, you know, he's a softy. He's a pushover.

He understands our weaknesses. Doesn't matter how we behave. God is just, he kind of rolls with everything, you know? Not so.

That's the imaginary God that we have produced to pacify our own fears. But the true God, the real God, the God of the Bible, we can look in the pages of scripture and find that he is a God who, of course, is loving, but he's also a God who can become angry at times. He's a God who calls us to walk in obedience

and truth.

He's a God who calls us to love one another. And he's a God who executes wrath on those who rebel and disobey him. And so I just want to send out a strong signal that if you're abusing your wife in any way, physically, emotionally, or verbally, God's watching what you're doing.

And you're going to answer for that. And you need to repent of that. There are other negatives.

We should never intentionally neglect our wives, just as we would never intentionally neglect ourselves. We do occasionally fall into self-neglect, but generally, it's not an intentional thing. And, you know, I think when it comes to the subject of neglect, I certainly would have to plead guilty to having neglected my wife at times.

But it hasn't been intentional. I haven't sat down and plotted out a path of neglect. But, you know, some have because neglect is another form of abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse.

And there's an intentional neglecting going on to bring the wife to a place of giving up and maybe saying, why don't you just go ahead and go? And that was what you were hoping for. That's the ticket out the door. And now you can blame it on her.

You know, we see that sort of thing a lot. It's amazing. And the thing that amazes me is that the guy thinks that he's getting away with it.

And I can't tell you how many cases I personally have seen where a man will drive his wife to the point of throwing up her hands and saying, go ahead and leave. He leaves and he says, hey, my wife kicked me out, man. You know, she's divorcing me.

I'm not divorcing her. Praise the Lord. I'm, you know, I'm a victim here.

No. You might have fooled everybody around you to think that that's the case. You might have painted your wife in a very dark way.

You might have vilified her, but you haven't fooled God at all. He's seen it all. And we've seen that intentional neglect in order to manipulate and to get one's way.

But again, we should never intentionally neglect our wives. We should seek to give them the attention and the affection that's due to them. And then we should never take them for granted.

Now, again, I must plead guilty to this. I have taken my wife for granted so many times. And like we would do with our own bodies physically, we take them for granted too, don't we? We oftentimes just assume that they're going to stay perfectly fit and we just, you know, never really think twice about what we're doing, what we're eating, how we're behaving or whatever.

And likewise in marriage, that can happen as well. But again, we have to be careful not to intentionally do these things, not to take our wives for granted. Sometimes I do that.

And then my wife goes away like she's gone right now. And then I cry and say, oh, Lord, forgive me for taking my wife for granted. Oh, how desperately I need her.

Get her home quickly. But, you know, when they're there all the time, we just take it all for granted. But we shouldn't do that.

That's not loving our wives as loving ourselves. So those are the negatives that we need to make sure we do our best. Of course, the first ones that we talked about with the abuse issue, under no circumstances should those things ever be happening in our relationship.

The other things we need to really be careful not to allow this to happen. But what is he saying now in a positive sense? He says, 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.

Here's the two key words, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. So on the positive side, this is what we're to do. We are to, first of all, nourish our wives.

Now, this word nourish, the Greek word translated nourish, it has behind it the idea of building up or helping to bring something to maturity. So what we conclude from that is what the apostle is saying is that men, we should treat our wives in ways that will build them up, strengthen them, as well as help them attain their full potential in Christ. You see, we should be seeking to bring them to that maturity, to bring them to that place of full potential.

In the Lord, you know, the Lord has a plan for you as a husband. He has a plan for your wife as well. And part of your job is to facilitate the plan of God being fulfilled in the life of your wife.

Remember, the wife is not there just to merely take care of things so you can get God's plan fulfilled in your life. We have to remember that God has a plan for her as well. And of course, to a large extent, there's a partnership there.

He has a plan for us together. But there is a sense where there's a distinct plan for each one, and we need to be sensitive to help cultivate and develop that and to bring that plan of God to full fruition in the life of our wives. Now, as we're talking about building up our wives and strengthening them, one of the most important things practically in the marriage relationship is communication.

And, you know, among marriage counselors, they say that the biggest problem in marriage is a lack of communication. Now, generally speaking, the man usually has a more difficult time with this than the woman. Men, you know, generally, and when I say generally, I'm generalizing that there are exceptions to the rule.

And so if you're one of the exceptions, don't be offended. Everybody else is, you know, like this. You might not be.

But generally speaking, the men usually have a more difficult time with communication. I know my children, if they want to have an account of something that happened, I'm the last person they're going to go to because I am going to give the most brief, boring account they have ever heard. But if they want to get a full account, all the details, with all of the thrill and excitement of the event itself, they go right to my wife because that's the way she is.

She communicates on that level, you know, and it's so funny how we just see this on and on and on in our personal experience in our marriage. And what will happen is, you know, I'll come home, for example, and something will have happened that day, and Cheryl will say, well, you know what happened? I'll say, oh,

you know, it's nothing. It's just no big deal.

I don't know. You know, that's kind of the extent of my exposition on the event. And then she'll talk to somebody else, a female friend who is privy to that same information, and she'll get all the details.

And she'll come back and she'll go, you didn't tell me this, and I can't, why didn't you tell me that? And I go, oh, yeah, I forgot, I forgot, you know. And, you know, that's just, that's the way it is. So I can really identify to some extent with this communication thing, because I tend to just communicate, you know, briefly, short, concise sentences and the briefest of accounts.

But you have to, if you're like that, you have to learn that you have to grow beyond that. And we can never stop learning or growing in our relationships. And in the area of communication, we can never stop learning or growing.

We need to learn to communicate with each other. Now, I've come a long ways, believe me. Some things I'll tell you, you know, might sound like this happened yesterday, but it happened many years ago.

But I will say in the early days, I'll tell you, I was pretty clueless. And if there's some of you, you know, younger people that are entering into marriage or just getting married, I tell you these things so you can maybe avoid some of the stupid things that I did. Based on some of my thinking at the time.

You know, when I first got married, I must say, I didn't know anything about all the important stuff about marriage. You know, I just knew that I loved her, she loved me, let's get married. You know, I didn't know that you had to communicate when you got married.

That wasn't a concept in my mind. And I just thought, you know, I had a lot of roommates and things like that, you know, prior to marriage. I just was thinking this is kind of a similar thing.

It's just a girl, you know. And, you know, my roommates, they didn't care if I talked to them when I came home. They weren't interested in the details of my day or anything like that.

They kind of had their life. I had mine. And, you know, once in a while, we'd sit around and talk about it.

But generally speaking, we all just sort of did our own thing. So when I go into marriage, I'm thinking that's probably similar to that. But then I find that that's not what my wife was thinking.

And so, you know, she would want to talk. There would be times when she would just say, let's just talk. And I would think, talk? Why would we want to do that? There's so many other things to do.

And here's how kooky I was back at the time. I remember one time specifically when she, you know, there were, you know, some problems and things that evidently she was sensing. I had no clue that we were having any problems.

But she said to me, she said, you know, we need to talk. And my response was, well, why do we need to talk? Why don't we just pray? And my thinking was, you don't talk through things. If you have problems, you just pray about them.

They go away. And then you go on, you know, your merry way. But that was my state as a 23-year-old.

But, of course, as I said, you learn as time goes on. And you realize that, oh, yes, talking is an important thing. Getting to know each other.

Communicating. And I do think that the statistic is a pretty accurate one, that many of the problems in marriage are due to a lack of communication. And so we need to develop the ability to communicate.

And remember, in another passage in the New Testament directed toward husbands, in 1 Peter 3, Peter says, Husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to them as the weaker vessel. Now, to paraphrase what Peter's saying is that we need to know our wives' needs and we need to dwell with them according to their needs and meet those needs. Now, the only way that I can really get to know my wife's needs is if I am talking with her.

You see, that's where the communication issue comes in. I've got to have conversation. I've got to sit down and I've got to listen to what she has to say.

And then as I listen, I've got to give feedback. I've got to respond. And so this is something that is included in this idea of nourishing, building up, strengthening, working alongside of our wives to help bring them into the full potential that God has for them as a person as well.

And then the other word that he uses here is the word cherish. Now, think about this word cherish. Cherish means to deem something precious, to hold it near and dear.

You know, we talk sometimes about a cherished memory. That's a memory that we just hold so near and dear to our heart. Oh, you know, those cherished memories of our children's childhood or something like that.

So the word cherish gives that idea that there's something precious that is to be held near and dear. The Greek word actually means to brood over. And it's the picture of a hen brooding over her chicks.

And it's the idea of protection and care. Born out of love, obviously. And so if we put the two words together.

Because that would probably be the best way to get to the full meaning of what the apostle is saying. Husbands, we are to cherish our wives. We are to deem them as precious and we're to hold them near and dear to our hearts.

We are also to have that sort of care for them. Paul uses the same word. It's only used twice in the New Testament.

He uses it in First Thessalonians when he's talking about his attitude and demeanor among the Thessalonians. In contrast with the false teachers who were trying to take advantage of them. He said we were among you and our care for you was manifest.

And he said we were like a nursing mother who cherishes her children. He used the same word there. So a mother who has that precious infant child and everything in her life is just taken up with this child.

And her whole being is there to serve and to minister to and to bring this child along to maturity. That's the word that Paul uses here for husbands in relation to wives. We are to cherish them.

We are to protect them. We are to provide physical protection, emotional protection, and spiritual protection. Physical protection, I think that doesn't mean just protecting your wife against a purse snatcher or something like that.

Although it certainly would include that. But physical protection speaks of provision and security for the wife. There are Christian husbands who are not responsible in the area of providing a secure environment for their wives.

And this is an area of failure. We have that responsibility. If I'm the kind of person who, you know, I'm not holding a job consistently.

I'm always off on to some new adventure, some get rich quick scheme. And never really settling into anything consistent that's going to provide that sort of stability and all that. Then I'm failing to cherish my wife.

I'm failing to heed the instruction of the Lord at that point. The scripture says that I have that responsibility as a man, as a husband. Remember Paul in writing to Timothy, he said, if a man does not provide for his own household.

He said that man has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. That's a serious charge. But it shows how seriously God takes this role of husband.

And this particular task of the husband to provide and bring security to the wife. So that is our responsibility. And I personally have seen many cases where the man is not fulfilled his obligation in this area.

Still out chasing that elusive deal or, you know, oh, this is going to come through. And never really settling into anything consistently. And dragging the wife off here and there and everywhere into these kinds of things.

And there's never that security. There's never that stability. There's never that sense of I'm being cherished.

I'm being protected. I'm being cared for. Then there's the emotional protection that we need to provide for our wives.

Again, this is going to be a generalization. Please don't be offended if you don't fall into this category. I'm reluctant to even say it.

This is my experience. Okay, I'm going to bring it down to that. This is my experience.

I could be dead wrong. This could be just an isolated case. Most women that I have met, been close to, dealt with, so forth, have struggled with what we call insecurities.

We okay still? Insecurities. Just, you know, I don't know why this is. I have a wife and two daughters.

And it's genetic. I think Eve had it and passed it on to every one of her daughters. It's just, you know, the things that my wife, she gets insecure about these things.

I look at my oldest daughter and, you know, my oldest daughter just forgive me for boasting, one of the most beautiful young women in the world. But does she think she's beautiful? Oh, no. She has the perfect nose.

She thinks, where did I get this giant nose? Who gave this thing to me? Every time I look in the mirror, that's all I see is my nose. I just say, honey, you have the perfect nose. And then, of course, she's fat.

She weighs about 105 pounds, but, you know, somehow that equates to fatness in her mind. But, you know, it's this insecurity thing. It's this thing that, you know, I'm not measuring up or, you know, I don't know.

This is a woman thing. I don't have this problem, so I'm sure some men have it as well. But this is something that we as husbands need to help our wives get a victory over.

We need to help them. And this is where the idea of emotional protection comes in, where we would protect them from these kinds of things. And I think, to a large degree, these things, they're sort of the byproduct of living in the kind of world that we live in and all the expectations, you know.

But I think they're also inspired by Satan. I think the devil is behind a lot of these things. You know, we have massive problems in our society with anorexia and bulimia and those kinds of things that young women battle with.

But it's all the pressures the world puts on them to be this way or to look like this or, you know. And then Satan comes in and he just needles away at that sort of thing. But I have found that as a husband, I actually have the power to help my wife with these things.

And this is where cherishing her really helps her to get a victory over these insecurities and rise above them. And so when we're talking about protecting them emotionally, we're talking about affirming our love to our wives. Just verbally communicating that, just telling them that we love them.

That's such an important thing. Like I said with my wife, she's in Florida, so I can say all these things. She'll never listen to the tape, and I know that you won't tell her any of the things I said.

But, you know, like I said earlier, she just has this thing that she thinks that I don't really love her. Well, you know, she knows that I'm going to fall out of love with her or something like that. I don't know why.

Maybe she saw too many melodramatic movies that, you know, that's what happened or something. I don't know how she got this into her mind. Or maybe it's because, you know, that all around marriages are breaking up.

The divorce rate is high. People are leaving one another and so forth. I don't know why these things are going on with her.

But I know this, that just affirming my love to her on a regular basis, it helps her to walk in victory over those things. And that's something that, for me personally, God has really put on my heart to do that and to do it frequently. To just tell her I love her.

That, I believe, is part of cherishing. I think it's important also to affirm not only our love but the fact that we delight in their beauty. I try to tell my wife as often as I can how beautiful she is.

Now, I guess it's partially what happens to you when you get older. When you hit a certain age, you know, and then you start thinking that maybe I'm going to get traded in for a newer model or something like that. I know that those kinds of thoughts go through my wife's mind.

And, you know, sometimes she will ask me, do you still love me now that I'm 41 and wrinkled? I say, well, I haven't really seen any wrinkles yet. But I do still love you now that you're 41, yes. But those kinds of things.

And so I find that with me, I have power actually to help her rise above these things. And to walk in peace and not in torment. And this is part of my job as a husband.

This is part of cherishing my wife. To affirm her beauty. And to affirm my commitment to her.

Because she lives with that fear in the back of her mind. Oh, you know, maybe he's going to leave me someday. And I want to let her know that I am not going to do that.

And so I will frequently affirm my commitment to her, to our marriage, to our family. And verbally just let her know that I'm in this for life. I'm in this for good.

I think in emotionally protecting our wives, we also need to cover any flaws that they might have. Rather than exploit that or take advantage of that or use that as a weapon against them. Love covers a multitude of sins.

I'm not talking about sins here. I'm just talking about flaws. Little things that, you know, maybe there's a certain thing that, oh, you just don't like that or whatever.

But you see, if you cherish your wife, you cover that. And then in emotionally protecting them, we need to be patient with the weaknesses that they might have. And then, of course, finally, there's the spiritual protection that we're to provide.

Men, we are to pray for our wives. We are to pray for our wives. We are already told in Scripture that the wife is the weaker vessel.

And Satan is looking for any area of vulnerability. He's looking for any weakness whatsoever. And he quite often will come against the wife.

So in cherishing my wife and protecting her, I'm going to be praying for her. And I'm going to be seeking to build her up through the ministry of the Word of God, through ministering the Word to her. Now, when it comes to ministering the Word, there have been suggestions that a husband is to, in order to fulfill his responsibility, he is to give a daily devotional to his wife or a weekly Bible study or something like that.

And in some cases, maybe that works. Maybe that's the thing that works for you. I remember years ago hearing that that was absolutely mandatory in a marriage, that you had to give Bible studies to your wife as the husband if you're going to really nourish and cherish her.

I don't think that it's mandatory, but I do think that we have a responsibility to share the Word with our wives. And it's a reciprocal thing to receive the Word from them as well. And just on a very practical level, my wife and I, we do not... We actually tried that years ago, too.

I tried to give her Bible studies. But she kept disagreeing with things I was saying, and it would end up in a fight instead of a Bible study. And then she tried to give me Bible studies.

I disagreed with her as well. Oh, it doesn't mean that. You know, so we figured just this is our personalities.

We figured this is not going to work, this form of Bible study. But what has developed over the years with us that works really good is that we just get together, not even necessarily a planned time, but it usually does work out two or three times a week, sometimes every day. We get together, and we just share with each other what God is speaking to us from the Word, what He's doing in our lives.

And that is a time where we are building one another up in the Word. And that is something that we need to be doing. Now, in the future, a few weeks down the road, we're going to be talking about Christian parenting, but we're also going to have a session on the Christian home, the kind of environment that we ought to be having in our home.

And one of the things that I want to talk about there that I'll touch on right now is that the Word of God ought to have a central place in your home. It ought to have a central place in your life personally, and it ought to have a central place in your relationship with your wife. We'll talk about how it ought to have a central place in your relationship with your children as well.

And I think it's because we don't do those things like we ought to, we don't take those things seriously, and in our marriages, we don't commit ourselves to that sort of a devotional life in the Word and ministering the Word to one another. It's no wonder that marriages are suffering like they are. But they're not beyond repair, and they're not beyond God's ability to turn things around and bless.

But as we've pointed out, the important thing in all of this is that we do what the Scriptures tell us to do, that we actually take this stuff and apply it to our lives. We practice it. If I'm practicing it, then I am going to have that wonderful experience that God intended when He brought the woman into existence to be the helper of the man.

If I'm not practicing what God's Word said, then life's going to be miserable. But it doesn't have to be. It shouldn't be.

It never should be for us as God's people. As we close tonight, guys, I want to just remind you of the fact that your wife is God's gift to you. But your wife is not yours.

You don't own her. She belongs to God. And you have been given a stewardship.

A stewardship is mentioned in the Bible numerous times. A steward was a manager. He was the manager of a household.

And the husband is, in a sense, a steward in that these things do not belong to him. They're not his own. They're God's, but we've been called to manage God's things.

Your wife is God's property. God's left her in your care. What's she look like? As God looks at his property, what does he see? Does he see a discouraged, beaten down, frustrated, condemned, humiliated, miserable person? If he sees that, then guess who's in trouble? You are.

You see, because you're responsible. The man has the responsibility, the primary responsibility. God wants to look down at your wife and he wants to see a flourishing woman being strengthened and built up and rising more and more to the attaining of the full potential that God had when he created her.

You're part of that. Take it with absolute seriousness because God does. And we will give an account to him in the future for how we have treated his precious property.

One more time. Husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

No one has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. Lord, we as husbands tonight, we pray that you would help us to be men who take our responsibility seriously. Lord, we pray that we would realize that we are stewards of our families, of our wives.

And Lord, that we would never be guilty of abusing our wives in any way. And Lord, if some are guilty of that, I pray that you would show them how serious a matter that is and cause them to repent and to never, ever do anything like that again. Lord, help us to not be neglectful or to take our wives for granted.

And help us, Lord, on the positive side to nourish them, to build them up and to cherish them, to hold them precious and near and dear to our hearts and to do all that we can. Lord, we know ultimately they belong to you and they're your workmanship, but you've called us to be part of the process of bringing them more and more into your image and help us to be faithful to do that. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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