

Understanding Marriage - Oneness in Marriage

by David Guzik

A husband's love for his wife should be self-sacrificing, based on decision and not feeling, and should be demonstrated through actions, attitudes, and thinking that include and prioritize his wife.

Duration: 35:57

Scripture: Genesis 2:23-24, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7-8, Ephesians 5:28-29, Ephesians 5:31

Topics: "Marriage Unity", "Selfless Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the biblical principle of unity in marriage. He highlights the importance of husbands and wives denying themselves and becoming one flesh, as instructed in the Bible. The speaker acknowledges that failure in marriage often stems from selfishness and urges couples to prioritize selflessness in their relationship. He also mentions that God's word provides the reasoning behind His commands, showing His desire for unity and love in marriage.

Transcript

This is the eighth message in the series, Understanding Marriage, from Ephesians chapter 5. The title of this teaching is, Oneness in Marriage. Let's join our teacher, Pastor David Guzik, speaking at Calvary Chapel of Simi Valley. Ephesians chapter 5, beginning at verse 28.

We're continuing our series, Understanding Marriage, from Ephesians chapter 5. And today we're going to talk about the reasons for a husband's love. And you'll see what I mean by that title as we get into our study this morning. Ephesians chapter 5, beginning at verse 28.

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.

The book of Ephesians chapter 5, verses 25 through 27, sets the standard for a husband's love towards his wife. We talked about that last week. How the standard is the love of Jesus and the love that he has for his people.

So first of all, that it's love based on a decision, not on a feeling. We know this from the very word for love that Paul used. This ancient Greek word we know as agape, which is different than a feeling kind of love.

The kind of love Paul's talking about is love that's made by a decision. That says, I'm going to decide to love in this situation. It doesn't wait for the feelings of love to arise, though the feelings may be there.

It's not that agape love contradicts feelings, or is without feelings. It's just simply that it isn't based on feelings. We saw also that it's love in attitude, that it's warm and affectionate.

And we know this from the description of Paul's describing of how the love of the husband should be. In Ephesians 5.25, he said, Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church. And when you think of how Jesus loves the church, it's a warm love.

It's an affectionate love. We saw that it's love in action. That it'll sacrifice itself for the sake of the beloved.

And we know this from Paul's description of the husband's love again in the same verse. He said, Husbands, love your wives just as Christ, and then it says, gave himself for it. I mean, Jesus just didn't feel thoughts of love towards the church.

No, he did something. He gave himself for it. And it was something that he did of self-sacrifice towards the church.

So, we've seen what this love is about. What I think is so great about God's Word, so great about the way He speaks to us, is that so often, God gives us the why behind His commands. He doesn't have to.

Isn't it really enough if God simply says, well, now do it because I said to do it. That should be enough, right? He knows us. He's our creator.

He made us. He gives us every breath that we breathe as a gift from God. It's enough just for Him to say, well, because I said so, that's why.

God loves us so much. And He wants us to share, He wants us to catch His vision behind His commands. But so often in the Scriptures, He gives us the why behind it.

So, husbands, you have every right this morning to say, listen, pastor, you're telling me that the Bible says I have to love my wife in a pretty radical way. I've got to love her based on decisions, not on feelings. I've got to love her in my attitude, and I've got to love her with self-sacrificing actions.

That's a tall order to fill. Why? Why do I have to have such a giving love? A love that's so far beyond what the world expects from a husband. Well, I'll tell you why.

First of all, He's already described why in one sense. The first reason why is because this is what love is. I mean, He says, husbands, love your wives.

He used that Greek word agape. Well, this is what it is. It's just defined by that that's what love is, and so that's why you should do it that way.

Secondly, we should love our wives this way because our relationship with our wife has a pattern. And the pattern for the marriage relationship is the relationship between Jesus and His church. And again, Paul indicates this over and over again in our passage.

He says, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church. See the just as in there? It means there's a pattern. You have a pattern for the way that you're supposed to love your wife.

And then he says, so husbands ought to love their own wives. So what? So according to the pattern of Christ's love. And then later on he says, just as the Lord does the church.

As the Lord loves the church, that's how the husband is supposed to love his wife. So the first reason is just because that's what love is. According to the biblical definition.

Second reason is, is God's given us a pattern for the way we should love. And the pattern is Jesus and His love for the church. But this morning we're going to discuss the third reason why.

I have to say this. This really impacted me. These were things that I have to say in all my years of study of this passage and understanding.

I never saw it the way that I saw it in coming to an understanding of it now. And I hope that I can live it better and better in my own marriage. As the weeks, as the months go by.

Because it's challenging. The third and perhaps the greatest, the central, the whole thematic reason here. Why we should love our wives with this self-sacrificing, absolutely giving all kind of way.

Why is this reason, it's explained in the text. It's because we are one with our wives. Just as Jesus is one with the church.

It's this teaching of unity. It's this teaching of the essential oneness of the husband and wife. Look at it in the text we saw here.

Ephesians chapter 5 beginning at verse 28 again. He says, So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. Now the little word in there, as, is very important.

What does he mean when he says that I ought to love my wife as my own body? Now he doesn't mean, and this is the way that I understood it for quite a while. But I do some good study here. I think that I've come to a different conclusion.

I used to believe that what Paul meant by this was, I should take care of my wife after similar manners I would take care of my body. In other words, I look after the needs of my body. I make sure that it's fed and clothed.

I pay attention to the needs of my body. Therefore I should pay attention to the needs of my wife. Now we have to say that first and foremost, this would be a huge improvement for many marriages, wouldn't it? I mean, there's no denying that.

But that's not the meaning here. This is the meaning behind Paul's example, and the rest of the context bears it out. The meaning is, So ought men to love their wives because they are their own bodies.

A man loves his wife as his body. In other words, she is part of you. When you are loving her, you're loving yourself.

You're taking care of yourself. She's part of you. There's a oneness here.

There's a unity that God has established. And as you give your love towards her, as you care for her needs, as you take consideration of her, what you're really doing is you're really taking consideration of yourself. Now, you see, as a man loves his body, he loves his wife.

No, that's not the idea. A man must love his wife as his body, as a part of himself. You see how God has woven this theme all since the very beginning? When Adam was created, and then Eve was created, where did Eve come from? From Adam's own body.

What did Adam say when he looked upon Eve for the first time? He said, this is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. You know what he's saying? She's part of me. And that was the essential unity that Adam understood from the very beginning.

The apostle puts it this way, so that the husband can see that he cannot, I'll say it again, husbands, you might try, we might try, but you cannot detach yourself from your wife. Just as much as you cannot detach yourself from your body, so you cannot detach yourself from your wife. She's part of you, and so you have to remember that always.

This means that you cannot live in isolation. You cannot live in detachment. And if you realize what Paul's saying here, that she's part of you.

God has knit you together, God has made you one. Just as much as Adam could say to Eve, she's bone of my bone, she's flesh of my flesh, she's part of me. So God's made you that way with your wife in the marital relationship.

And if you understand that, if you grab a hold of that, well then there's no danger in thinking of detachment. You don't wish and will and desire to be detached from your wife. Still less, how could there be any antagonism or hatred if you realize that your wife is part of you? You may as well start trying to chop off your own foot.

Or beat yourself in the face. It's the same self-defeating kind of action. You see, friends, this is simply any element of hatred between a husband and a wife, it's sheer madness.

It shows that the husband has no biblical understanding of what marriage is. Notice another phrase that Paul uses in this passage. Verse 28 started by saying, So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies.

And we know what that means, right? It means because she is part of your own body. And then he goes on, look what he says at the end of verse 28. Did you see that? He who loves his wife loves himself.

Do you see how he just repeats the same idea in different words? Simply said, husbands, grab a hold of this. When you love your wife, you benefit yourself. Or perhaps it's better to put it in the negative.

When you neglect your wife, you neglect yourself. And it will come back to hurt you. Now, we all know what it's like to neglect something.

I'm speaking mainly or focusing my remarks towards husbands this morning. So let's take the example of your automobile, right? There it is, and you hear this noise. And the noise is going on and on.

It's, well, forget that, who really cares, right? And you neglect it, and you neglect it, it doesn't matter. In the end, we can all smile, we can laugh at that, because we recognize that man is just hurting himself, isn't

he? One time I was working on my car, and, well, I didn't tighten up all the lug nuts on my wheels. And so there I was, and I started hearing this noise.

That's funny, it's a funny noise, isn't it? Well, I just drove on right through it. Pretty soon, here I was, I was on a rush, I was on my way to work, it was many years ago, and all of a sudden I see, thump, the car starts, right? And I see a tire roll past me. Now, you know, if I would have stopped immediately when I heard the noise and addressed it for what I do, I neglected it.

Really, it didn't really hurt the car that much, the car ended up to be fine. But it hurt me. I was late to work, and it was just to my own harm.

Friends, it's even more true regarding your wife, because that car is yours, but it's not part of you. Oh, I know you think it is, but it's not. You see, that wife of yours, she's part of you.

And it's even more true. You neglect her, you mistreat her, it's going to come back to hurt you. Look at the next thing he says here in verse 29.

Verse 29. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. Now, any man in his right mind is going to take care of his own flesh, even if it's just in the sense of feeding it and clothing it and caring for his body.

And he knows that if he doesn't, he's going to suffer for it. In the same way, once we know the biblical fact of this unity, if we're in our right minds at all, we're going to nourish and cherish our wives because she's part of us. And look, he explains the same thing again.

Look at it here in verse 31 there, where he says, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Do you see how he's repeating this theme over and over again? I look back, oh, how could I miss it? This is like the major theme. This is what he really wants to emphasize.

It's the unity between the husband and the wife. And just as the first man and the first woman were one, just as Adam could look at Eve and say, she's bone of my bone, she's flesh of my flesh, she's part of me. He didn't say, she was bone of my bone.

She was flesh of my bone. No, he said, is. Because he recognized that even though they were two separate bodies, God had made them one.

Eve was taken from Adam and then brought back to him. And so it could be said of every married man today, that he is joined to his wife. And God did the joining.

Husband, you can resent it, you can resist it, you can ignore it, you can neglect it, but it doesn't change the fact. God has joined you together, he's made you one. Now, I think we've seen how our text here teaches this principle of oneness, right? So here's my first question.

How should this principle of oneness affect the husband's thinking? How should he think in his marriage and towards his wife? Well, first of all, it means that the husband must realize that his wife is part of himself. I mean, that's it, right? He should look at his wife and realize, she's part of me. There's an essential oneness, there's a unity there.

She is part of me. Now, I'm going to say something that may be a shock to some wives or may not be a shock to you at all. You may understand this perfectly.

But I need to say it nonetheless. Your husband does not realize this instinctively. He doesn't.

Now, wives do. Wives have an instinctive appreciation and grasp of the unity in the marital relationship. Of course, I'm speaking in the general sense.

You can always find some wives who don't and some husbands who do. But I'm speaking in the general sense of the genders and how they think and how they act. Ladies and gentlemen, wives have an instinctive grasp of the unity, of the oneness of the marital relationship.

Wives, let me tell you something. Your husband does not. He does not have this instinctive grasp.

And you've wondered and you've got angry and perhaps you've even become bitter. Well, why doesn't he think this way? It's simply because it's just not in him instinctively. But it can be in him biblically.

God can show him. God can teach him. But wives, just don't go around with all this bitterness or anger and resentment from your husband.

Believe me, he's just like every other husband. He doesn't realize this instinctively. This is something that husbands need to grow and they need to learn.

Let me say something else. He can't be nagged into this. He can't be guilt tripped into this understanding.

He has to understand it and believe it and act upon it according to what God says in the Bible. The husband must realize that the wife is part of himself and he has to be taught it. It won't come to him by instinct.

And the Bible, in all of its part, teaches it. That husband must come to the place where he understands that he and his wife, they're not two, but they're one. And this means something.

Friends, let's grab hold of this. That for success in the marriage relationship, we have to think and understand. Now, doesn't this set the Christian marriage miles apart from the world's thinking of what marriage is all about? In the world's way of thinking, think and understand have no place in the marital relationship.

In the world's way of thinking, the marital relationship is just based on love, feelings. No. Thinking and understanding.

That's what it takes to form a biblical marriage. You see, the world never really wants a person to think and understand about marriage. And the mind hardly comes in at all.

And the result is that when they come upon difficulties, they have no thinking to fall back on. And they don't know what to do. The feelings are gone.

Listen, you're not feeling great when you're in an argument. And so if you don't have thinking and understanding to fall back upon, you panic. You rush to a separation.

You rush to a divorce. And then you go and you repeat the same situation again and again. The reason is because there's an absence of thinking, an absence of understanding, that marriage has been built on the

foundation of what the world thinks of as love.

But really it's just feeling. It's just emotion. It needs to be built on a different foundation.

So, understand this. Husbands, you may not understand this by instinct, but you need to learn it by biblical truth. Your wife is part of you.

I guess we could say, and another way to put this, is that the wife is more than a partner. I know many wives just wish that their husbands would treat them like partners. Might I say that that's not a biblical marriage? That's not sufficient.

They are partners, but they're more than partners. I mean, you can have two men in business who are partners, who work together, but that's not the biblical idea of a marriage. The analogy goes much higher than that.

It's not a question of partnership, even though that's included in the idea. No, if you want a good phrase to express it, it's kind of a quaint phrase today, but when a husband would come up and introduce his wife as his better half, he kind of has the idea there, doesn't he? She's part of me. And what he means is, I am incomplete without her.

She's part of me, and without her, I'm not whole, I'm only half. That's the idea. The two shall become one flesh.

The very word half puts the whole case in where Paul is elaborating on it here. Husbands, do you understand it? When you love your wife, you're not loving somebody else. You're loving yourself.

You're taking care of yourself. I think that this gives us an amazingly positive conception of the Christian marriage. This is a view of marriage which is not possible, but within the Christian faith, it lifts up the marriage from beyond the way of the thinking of this world to illustrate the relationship between Jesus and the church.

It's something positive. The great danger is that we think of marriage the same way that our world does. And the only difference is that the two people, well, they happen to be Christians, where the other people, well, they're not.

No, if that's your thinking about the marital relationship, you're going to miss it. You see, there should be a great, great difference in the Christian marriage. Here's another point along these lines.

This is how to change the husband's thinking. He first of all says, I've got to think, I've got to understand, because this won't come to me by instinct. Secondly, he says, I've got to see my wife as more than a partner.

She is part of me, not just a partner. Thirdly, as it works out in a marriage, the husband must include the wife and her welfare in all of his thinking. You're not just thinking about yourself anymore, husband.

You have to think about your wife. On a practical level, the whole of the husband's thinking must include his wife. He must never think of himself in isolation or detachment.

The moment he does so, he's broken the fundamental principle behind the marriage. When the man thinks of himself in isolation, he's breaking the principle upon which the marriage is founded. And husband, you

don't have any right to do that.

She's part of you. Now, there's a sense in which you can't do it. I mean, she's part of you, and she does not become part of you when you don't think about her.

What it is, is you're just not making the whole arrangement God has made. You're not causing it to work the way it should. You're inflicting terrible damage upon your wife, and it's damage to what you're doing to yourself.

You're acting against yourself, but you don't even realize it. You can't be individualistic. You're only half, and you need to think about the other half.

You must never have your desires just to yourself alone. Your desires must cover both of you. You're no longer one man.

You're no longer free in that sense. Your wife is involved in all of your desires, in all of your aspirations. You must never think of your wife as an addition.

Or, it's even worse to say, as some men talk about their wives as a burden. No, she's part of you. Don't we see by this what the real cause of failure in marriage is? I'll give you, it's a four-letter word.

The real cause of failure in marriage is self. When the husband starts thinking self, well, and then the wife starts thinking self. Do you see what they're doing? Do you see what the principle of self does? It totally contradicts what God is trying to establish in the marital relationship where the two become one.

No, it says, no, the two, they're going to remain two, and they're going to try to get along the best they can, but they're going to remain two. God says, no, you deny yourself, husband and wife. The wife has plenty of ways to deny herself, right? It doesn't seem that long ago, although in the middle of this passage, it seems like a million years ago that we're talking about the obligations of the wife.

But she has plenty of ways in which she must deny herself, doesn't she? Well, husband, this is how you need to do it. The real cause of failure in marriage is self. Self, with all of its horrible ways it expresses itself.

It always leads to trouble. Self always wants everything for itself. And so he says, hey, you've got to start thinking, you two, you're one now.

Now, when the two are one, how can conflict arise? How can there be this dispute? How can you have this knock-down, drag-out argument? Well, you may as well go around punching yourself in the face, hitting yourself in the chest, whatever you want to do. You're punishing yourself. You've forgotten this principle of unity.

Might I say as well, that when we're talking about the husband's thinking, we realize that this thinking of unity must influence all of the husband's thinking. This is a great commandment to married men, never to be selfish. And to deliberately remind himself all the time, I'm a married man, there's someone else who's a part of me.

She's not my partner, she's part of me. And whatever I think of for myself, I must also think of her. My thinking must never be individualistic.

It must always bring in what's good for her, what's good for us. God has given me the place of taking care of her. All his thinking, all his wishing, all his desiring, the totality of his life, the totality of his activity, it must include her.

It's a high call for the thinking of a man, but this is what God instructs us to. Now, how does this principle of oneness affect the husband's actions? We've talked about how it should affect the husband's thinking, right? How does it affect his actions? Well, let me state two negatives and then two positives. First of all, one negative is, obviously, the husband is never to abuse the wife.

Never. Many men mistreat their own bodies. Look around you.

We know how to do that, right? But this is foolish, isn't it? The same way many men mistreat their wives, and it's the same as abusing their own bodies. When you look at a man who's abusing his own body, maybe it's substance abuse, maybe it's some weird form of self-mutilation, you look at that man and you say, he's either crazy or he's a fool. Honestly, friends, I know it sounds strong, but when we understand these principles, you can say the same thing to a man who's mistreating his wife.

He's either crazy or he's a fool, because he's hurting himself. I mean, apart from the inherent wrongfulness of what he's doing, he's simply a fool. Secondly, the husband is not to neglect his wife.

I mean, you can abuse your own body, right? But then you can also have a different kind of abuse, the abuse that comes from neglect. And many men neglect their own bodies, and that's foolish. Now, what happens when you neglect your body? Well, every one of us men who are getting on in age can tell that story, right? See, there's a time when you could go out and do a lot of things, right? You could go out and, well, you know, you could surf in certain kind of conditions, you know, and you go out eight-foot day, and right, I'll go out there and I'll charge on it, you know, and great, wonderful.

Now you go out there on the eight-foot day and you're terrified. And you might surf it, and you come back, what's the difference between now and then? I'm older, I should be smarter, I should be wiser. You say, well, I haven't taken good care of this body.

And you're out there and you think, I want my body to do this, I want it to just spring up at the right moment, and with the right balance, and with the right, you know, momentum, and just to do exactly what it wants. And what do you find? You find that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. That you want to do something, but your body won't respond.

Why? Because you've neglected your body. Maybe in the same way, when you neglect your wife, you may want to do things with your life or as a married couple, but it's not going to be able to happen, because you've been neglecting your wife. A married man must no longer act as if he's a single man.

His wife should be involved in everything. Doesn't this simply mean that man and wife should do things together? Now, of course, there's aspects of business, there are aspects of other occasions when the man has to be alone and do things alone, but even in those things, he needs to allow his wife to enter into those things. Husbands, this applies to the work of the ministry as well, right? Don't leave your wife a widow because you're out there serving the Lord, no.

Don't treat your home as a dormitory where you just return to sleep. No, there's to be an active, positive, ideal relationship there. And you need to keep that goal in the forefront of your mind.

And you may resign from it already and say, well, I know I can't fulfill it perfectly, so why even try? Well, no, you're right. You're not going to be able to fulfill it perfectly. Do the best you can.

So, if he's a married man, don't behave as a single man. Don't do it for the name of the Lord. Don't do it in any respect.

Not for the name of riches or your career. There can be incredible selfishness at that point. Now, a lot of times, it's really nothing worse than thoughtlessness.

Honestly, man. Oftentimes, that's how it is. And the wives think it's sometimes part of a great conspiracy of the man against the wife.

He makes all these plans to avoid her. No, oftentimes, in the heart or the mind of a man, it's simple thoughtlessness. But friends, in any case, a Christian should not be guilty of thoughtlessness.

You might say, well, it's not as bad as deliberate neglect. Well, no, but it's still bad. And the end result can still be the same.

And the third principle here on how it means a man should treat his wife is it means that a man must always appreciate his wife and never take her for granted. He must think of what he can do to nourish and cherish her. I mean, you think about what you're going to eat, so you should think about what will help your wife, what will strengthen your wife.

Man, you like to eat what pleases you, right? You nourish and cherish your own body that way. Well, think about what pleases your wife. Nourish and cherish her spiritually.

You went out of your way to do this before you got married. Now you don't. Nourish and cherish her now.

Exercise. Man, you recognize, even if you don't do it, you recognize, well, exercise is important to a healthy body. Well, in the same way, you need to, so to speak, exercise with your wife.

And so often, you know what this means, as simple as anything? It just means talking with your wife. You know, she wants to be involved in your life. She has an instinctive grasp of this unity.

And even though you don't have an instinctive grasp of it, she does. And so she wants to know about your business, about your worries, about what's going on every day. And so bring her into it.

She's your body. Bring her into it. Speak to her concerning it.

Bring understanding to bear on it. She's part of your life. So bring her into your whole life.

Make yourself talk to your wife. It's hard. You come home from a long day.

Oftentimes, you just don't feel like talking. I understand that. But you have to do it nonetheless.

She's part of you. You neglect her, you're hurting yourself. So look at your wife and appreciate the oneness.

Fourthly, I'd say this really applies to the point how we have to always protect our wives. You protect your own body, right? You're protecting it right now with clothing. You protect when you drive, when you do things to take care of yourself.

So you must protect your wife. You know, that's Peter's whole point in this passage where he talks about the wife being the weaker vessel. It means you protect your wife.

You know, infections come against our bodies. And so sometimes we'll go get that inoculation, right? To protect our body. You get a flu shot, why? I'm going to inoculate myself with something so that I won't get ill.

I want to protect my body. And so inoculate your marriage. Do things to protect it.

If there's some kind of peculiar, exceptional trial or anxiety or problem, if something's testing your wife to the uttermost, then go out of your way to protect your wife and to help her. She's as the Bible says, she's the weaker vessel. So you go and you protect her.

Do everything you can to build up your resistance in your Christian life, in your marriage there, as you would build up the resistance in your body so that you're strong against outside infections and attacks. Prepare yourself for the hazards of life. You have to build her up.

Men, do we see it here? It's not easy to see. It's not easy to allow this to really transform our minds and our thinking. I think that if we give it enough time, it happens.

Have you seen a couple that's been married 50, 60 years? They're one, aren't they? I mean, the unity that comes forth from a couple like that, it's absolutely mind-blowing. I mean, they just have such an instinctive sense of their oneness so often. I do think we can give something better to our wives and say, you know, sweetheart, in 30 or 40 years, I'll be there.

Let's give it time. Well, it's not going to be an overnight change, but neither does it have to be 30 or 40 years. Men, do you see the biblical principle here? Take it to heart.

Now, I wish we had time this morning because there's something that I would really like to talk about in regard to this, but we'll save it and we'll start it off for next week because this really shows us a lot about our own relationship with Jesus, doesn't it? The kind of unity that He wants with us. We'll leave that for next week. Let's just conclude with prayer right now and ask God to make us better husbands in this regard.

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