

**05/19/24      “A Husband’s Love for His Wife – part 2”  
Ephesians 5:28-33**

Welcome...

**We are studying the book of Ephesians. Let’s read, Ephesians 5:22-33...**

Federal headship is a term that theologians use to describe the concept that one person represents those who are under his care, protection, or authority, to another person. A person’s federal head is the individual who has been elected to represent him before a particular authoritative body or individual.

A. W. Pink wrote, “When Adam stood in the Garden of Eden as a responsible being before God, he stood there as a federal head, as the legal representative of all his posterity. When Adam sinned, all for whom he was standing are accounted as having sinned; when he fell, all whom he represented fell; when he died, they died. So too was it with Christ. When He came to this earth, He, too, stood in a federal relationship to His own people; and when He became obedient unto death, all for whom He was acting were accounted righteous; when He rose again from the dead, all whom He represented rose with Him; when He ascended on high, they were regarded as ascending with Him. As 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

Being a federal head has tremendous responsibilities. If the government of Iran officially declared war on the United States, or the president of the United States declared war against Iran, every US citizen would legally be at war with every Iranian citizen. Why is this so?

If their federal (i.e., representative) head decided to wage war against us, and our president and congress (our representatives) declared war against Iran, you and I would be (at least officially) at war with them.

Federal headship is illustrated in Romans 5:12–14, when Paul says, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

Adam represented all of us (every person in the human race), even though we had not all sinned in exactly the way that he did.

Wayne Grudem explains, “It was not true that all men had actually committed sinful actions at the time that Paul was writing, because some had not even been born yet, and many others had died in infancy before committing any conscious acts of sin. So Paul must be meaning that when Adam sinned, God considered it true that all men sinned in Adam.”

So, practically speaking, what does it mean for you, husband, to be the head of your wife? Being your wife’s head means that you are responsible. Not only are you responsible to preside over her, but you are also responsible to provide for her. You are ultimately responsible for what is happening in her life. You are responsible to be aware of what your wife is doing and how she is doing it. You are responsible to dwell with her according to knowledge, to learn about her, to understand her, to sanctify her, and to protect her. But most of all, as her head, you are responsible to love her.

**Main point: Ephesians 5:28-33 describes three qualities of a husband’s love for his wife.**

**A Husband’s Indispensable Love for His Wife v. 28-30**

## **A Husband's Inseparable Love for His Wife v. 31**

## **A Husband's Inspired Love for His Wife v. 32-33**

My prayer is that each husband listening would first know the love of Christ and then day by day by inspired by Christ's love and live for Him and love your wife in a Christlike way.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. "

In that passage, Paul is not speaking about his love for Christ, but about Christ's love for him. Paul never ceased to be amazed by Christ's love for sinners as demonstrated by His sacrificial death on the cross. We just sang the wonderful words, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

### **I. A Husband's Indispensable Love for His Wife**

Ephesians 5:28...

The word "So" at the beginning of verse 28 refers back to the reference to Christ's love for the church. It points back to the love of Christ described in verses 25–27, not forward to a selfish self-love. It is not saying "Husband you need to learn to love yourself so that you can love your wife. It is not from the love of self to love of one's wife to love of Christ.

Rather, it is from the love shown by Christ, knowing and experiencing His love, to the love shown for his wife to the love a husband shows for himself. As Paul writes in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

In Ephesians 5:28 the new dimension for a husband's love is that his wife is actually part of himself.

The command to "love their wives as their own bodies" reflects the love of Christ for the church, His body (verse 30). At the same time, the word "body" provides a link to the one-flesh concept of Genesis 2:24, a verse Paul quotes in verse 31. If the husband as head of his wife, loves her as being his own body, then he is only loving himself.

Now, it is a natural aspect of the human condition to love, nurture, and protect oneself. The fact is, you already love yourself. As a matter of fact, you've been loving yourself your whole life. When you were an infant, you were fanatically committed to the care of your own body.

Just ask your mother, "Mom, was I fanatically committed to the care of my own body when I was an infant?" She will answer, "Oh yes. At three in the morning, you didn't care what I was going through, you were hungry and you wanted what you wanted when you wanted it. You were committed to your own body then, and I have seen it all the way through. It never left."

Now as a grown man when you're hungry, you feed yourself. When you're thirsty, you give yourself drink. When you are tired, you rest. When you have an itch, you scratch it. Everything you have needed, you have looked after your whole life. Your love for yourself has never stopped.

But now, you're married. Ephesians 5:28 says, "Love your wife as your own body" And then it becomes even more personal in verse 29...

Notice the categorical denial by saying “no one” that is followed by the word “ever” reinforcing the categorical denial.

Verse 29 says when you husband love your wife you “nourish and cherish” your own flesh. These two verbs “nourish” and “cherish” actually mean much more than meets the eye.

The first verb “nourish” encompasses the physical, emotional, and spiritual nature of a person. To nourish a wife is to provide for her needs, to give that which helps her grow and mature in favor with God and man.

The second verb in verse 29 “to cherish” literally means “to keep warm” and, figuratively, “to cherish” and “to comfort.” Paul’s only other use of this verb is in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, where, in powerful imagery, he speaks of his love for the Thessalonians, “But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.”

To cherish her is to use tender love and physical affection to give her warmth, comfort, protection, and security. As Christ provides for His church, so the husband provides for his wife.

As our loving Shepherd, Christ nourishes and cherishes us, He loves and cares for us, He is committed to us and will lead us and change us so that we reach spiritual maturity and one day are glorified in heaven.

Likewise, Ephesians 5 says that because a husband loves his wife, he will give his life for her good and will express his love by nourishing and cherishing her. I have seen this lived out in married couples.

The piano here on our stage was given by Al Miller in honor of his wife, Nadine, who died from ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease). I actually never had a conversation with Nadine because when I first moved here in 2000, she already could not speak.

As the effects of ALS progressed Nadine lost the ability to play the piano, lost the ability to speak, and then eventually lost the ability to swallow and difficulty breathing. But Al faithfully loved and cared for his wife. When I asked how he was doing and mentioned how difficult it must be caring for his wife, he said in a very simple way, “It’s not difficult to care for someone you love.”

Husband, how does your love for your wife compare with your love for yourself? Do you provide for her needs as readily as you do your own? If you don’t love and care for her as intently as you love and care for yourself, then you don’t love her enough.”

Verse 29b-30...

As it is natural for man not to hate his own flesh but to nurture and take care of it, so it is also the natural thing for Christ to nurture and take care of his body, the church.

Jesus redeemed His body, the church (1:7–12; 2:1–10), sealed it (1:13–14), empowered it (1:19–23), brought it into one body (2:16), filled it with God’s fullness (3:19), gifted it (4:7–16), and loved and sanctified it (5:25–26).

Even with all its imperfections Christ nurtures and takes tender care of His body, the church. Christ did not give birth to the church and leave us stranded. He nurses the church with the warmth of His love, truth, and power so that the church will thrive. Christ, as head of the church, is not only a ruler or authority over the church, but also the source of nourishment by which it is nurtured. Why?

Look at verse 30...

Earlier in Ephesians, Paul mentioned that the church is Christ's body (1:22–23; 5:23), but now replacing impersonal statements with the first-person plural, he becomes more personal by claiming that he and the Christians in Ephesus are members of that body. And so are you if you are a Christian.

The husband is to love his wife with an indispensable love. Second,

## **II. The Husband's Inseparable Love for His Wife**

Husbands have been commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church and in the same way that they love their own bodies (verse 28). Now Paul goes one step further and claims that husbands and wives are in reality one flesh.

Verse 31...

Verse 31 is a direct quotation from Genesis 2:24 to emphasize the permanence as well as the unity of marriage. God's standard for marriage did not change from the time of Adam until the time of Paul, and it has not changed to this day.

One of the greatest barriers to successful marriage is the failure of one or both partners to leave ... father and mother. In marriage, a new family has begun, and the relationships of the former families are to be severed as far as authority and responsibilities are concerned. Parents are always to be loved and cared for, but they no longer have authority over their children once they are married.

The Hebrew term for leave is translated elsewhere as "to forsake, to abandon, to not return." More is implied in this leaving one's parents besides mere geographic location. For example, the new husband and wife leave behind parental provision. Up to this point, they may have been largely dependent upon their parents to provide for their needs. After marriage, they break all such dependence and depend on each other (and of course on the Lord).

The newlywed couple also leaves behind emotional dependence. Whereas their "emotional umbilical cords" have previously been attached to their parents, they must now be attached to the new spouse. Another important part of leaving and cleaving has to do with abandoning parental beliefs, lifestyles, values, and traditions that are not clearly delineated in the Scriptures. Unless both husband and wife agree, such extrabiblical standards should not be automatically carried over from one family to another. This same principle holds true about whom you please. One who is married is concerned not about how he may please his parents, but rather about how he may please his wife.

The term for "cleave" literally means to be glued or cemented together. Husbands and wives are to leave their parents and to cleave to, be cemented to, each other. They break one set of ties as they establish the other, and the second is more binding and permanent than the first.

Just as the body of Christ is indivisible, God's ideal design for marriage is that it be indivisible. As Christ is one with His church, husbands are one with their wives. Therefore, when a husband insults his wife, he actually insults himself. When he harms his wife, he harms himself. A husband who violates his marriage violates himself. A husband who destroys his marriage destroys a part of himself.

Have you ever been in the middle of a marital discussion, and things begin to escalate? And in the middle of this heated debate, you begin to simply follow your sinful heart which whispers a lie to you. And the lie is this, “It is possible for you to hurt your wife and not be hurt too.”

Thankfully, the Holy Spirit brings Ephesians 5:31 to your heart and mind and you remember you are one flesh! You can’t hurt your wife and not be hurt. It’s impossible. This leads you to say, “Lord, how can I love and serve my wife? How can I lead us out of this conflict in a way that will honor You and really help my wife?”

Conflicts are going to happen. But ultimately, “he who loves his wife loves himself,” means I’m going to seek a shared experience of joy. The joy of the Lord will be our strength. My joy is going to be yours, your joy is going to be mine. That’s what we’re looking for, that’s the oneness. We’re no longer selfishly divided.

If you have sinned against your wife, you need to ask for her forgiveness. And if she has sinned against you, you need to lovingly bring it up to her, so she can repent and ask for your forgiveness.

The disciples had a hard time accepting Christ’s command that they forgive an offender seven times in one day if he claimed that he was repentant. Jesus said in Luke 17:3, “Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

Think about that for a moment. Your wife rejects you seven times in one day and, seven times, returns to you asking your forgiveness - and Jesus says that you must forgive her. Now, after the second or third time, you’re going to have some serious doubts about the sincerity of her repentance, aren’t you?

Yet Jesus says that, if she returns to you seven times a day saying, “I repent,” you must take her at her word and forgive her. That’s kind of hard to believe, right? The disciples were also incredulous. Luke 17:5 tells us, “And the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’”

When a man and woman are joined in marriage, Jesus said in Matthew 19:6, “They are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

We have seen the indispensable love ...inseparable love, and third:

### **III. A Husband’s Inspired Love for His Wife**

After quoting Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31), Paul gives an interpretation that shows God’s purpose in marriage.

Look at verse 32...

Verse 31 is a quote from Genesis 2:24. But unbeknown to the people of Moses’ day (it was a “mystery”), marriage was designed by God from the beginning to be a picture or parable of the relationship between Christ and the church. Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose: it would give a beautiful earthly picture of the relationship that would someday come about between Christ and His church. This was not known to people for many generations, and that is why Paul can call it a “mystery.” But now in the New Testament age, Paul reveals this mystery, and it is amazing.

This means that when Paul wanted to tell the Ephesians about marriage, he did not just hunt around for a helpful analogy and suddenly think that “Christ and the church” might be a good teaching illustration. No, it was much

more fundamental than that: Paul saw that when God designed the original marriage He already had Christ and the church in mind. This is one of God's great purposes in marriage: to picture to the world and to your children the relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever!

But if this is so, then the order Paul is speaking of here (submission and love) is not accidental or temporary or culturally determined: it is part of the essence of marriage, part of God's original plan for a perfect, sinless, harmonious marriage.

A husband's greatest motive for loving, purifying, protecting, and caring for his wife is Christ's love, purifying, protecting, and caring for His own bride, the church. Christian marriage is to be loving, holy, pure, self-sacrificing, because those virtues characterize the relationship of Christ and the church.

The sacred relationship between Christian husbands and wives is inextricably related to the sacred relationship between Christ and His church. Because of this great sacredness, we read in verse 33...

The use of "nevertheless" is intended to end the discussion and emphasize what is most essential to remember.

Husband, do you understand this? You may object, "Pastor, you don't know my wife. She does not respect me, honor me, or submit to me. How can I get her to come under my headship, under my authority?"

Husband, you must first be under the headship, the authority, the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You need to keep your eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith. You must live by faith in the promises of God and not simply follow your feelings.

And as you model Christlike love to your wife, you can trust God that you are doing what is right and pleasing in His eyes. And you can trust that in God's timing, your wife will love you because you first loved her, as the church does Christ. 1 John 4:19, "We love because He first loved us."

A husband was listening to a sermon from our text in Ephesians 5 and the preacher emphasized that Christlike love requires putting the wife ahead of self. It convicted this husband, who realized that he had been pretty selfish and insensitive. So as he left his job on Wall Street and drove to join his family on vacation, he prayed that during the vacation he would try to be a totally loving husband. No excuses!

His resolve was immediately tested. After the long drive, he wanted to veg and watch a movie, but his wife suggested a walk on the beach. He started to refuse, but then he thought, "She's been alone with the kids all week and now she wants to be alone with me." So, he went for the walk on the beach.

So it went for two weeks. He resisted the temptation to call the Wall Street firm where he was director to check on things. He agreed to a visit to the shell museum, although he usually hated museums. He held his tongue when his wife was slow in getting ready made them late for a dinner engagement. For two weeks, he kept his promise to choose to love his wife and put her ahead of self.

But on the last night of the vacation, as they got ready for bed, his wife stared at him with the saddest expression. "What's the matter?" he asked. Her voice was filled with distress as she said, "Do you know something I don't?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you know that several weeks ago the doctor had me complete lab work. I have not heard the results, but perhaps you have spoken with our doctor and he has shared the lab results with you. You've been so good to me on this vacation ... am I dying?"

After it all sank in, he burst out laughing and said, “No, honey, you’re not dying; I’m just starting to live!”

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (5:25). Do you love your wife even as you love yourself (5:31)?

Here is your assignment this week. Before you go to Community Group this week, take the Discussion Questions that are on your sermon outline in the bulletin (and in our church app) and go through them one by one with your wife. Ask her, “How can I better love you in a Christlike way?” Be sure to pray before and after your time together.

Let’s pray...