

## The New Testament Man

### Ephesians 5:25 &28-33 and Philippians 2:1-8

- God made man to be His image bearer in creation
  - Before the fall we could fulfill His plan, but after sin destroyed our relationship with God and enslaved us to the flesh, we are simply not up to the task.
  - We've seen that in Matt's lesson
- Jesus came and enabled us to have a restored relationship with God
  - Through the presence of the holy Spirit we can, once again live out our intended rolls on this earth.
  - But only Jesus was able to execute that restoration, because he came and lived the perfect life.
    - He fulfilled what God intended man to be
    - Then he sacrificed himself for everyone
    - We're going to see how that *is* the New Testament Man
- Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

  - It's important to remember. . . even more, it's important to meditate on the fact that God didn't look at the world and see things he liked and say, "hey I think I'll use that as an example!"
  - God created father's, husbands, marriage, and other real things in the world, knowing before-hand that he would use them to help us understand more about Him.
    - It's so important, when we look at Ephesians 5 that we remember, God isn't using marriage to give us an idea of who Jesus Christ was
    - He *created marriage* knowing that he was going to use it to give us an idea of who Jesus Christ is.
  - So, men, as husbands, we are supposed to be sacrificial, just like Jesus was
    - Our behavior as husbands is a window to our family, and the world of what God's love for us looks like.
      - We can so muddy the window with our selfishness, pride, greed, and other sin that it gives a warped view of God to the world
      - But through growing in Christlikeness, we should be an ever-clearer picture of this love that so loved the world, while we were enemies of God, he sent his son to die for us!
- Ephesians 5:28-33

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. <sup>30</sup> For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. <sup>31</sup> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself

  - This marriage that God created to reflect back to Him is made up of
    - A man who has the power and authority to withhold
      - He can refuse to love his wife sacrificially

- If he couldn't then, it wouldn't be sacrifice anymore than taxation is charity
  - But this man, who could sit around and think about himself all day
    - Instead, love's his wife as much as he loves his own body
  - When he does this he creates a living picture, for the world, of the type of relationship God wants to have with us through Jesus Christ!
    - And this is the truly awe-inspiring part
    - Because when the passage goes into the detail of the two becoming one flesh, this is a great mystery
    - But "I speak concerning Christ and the church"!
    - That deep, intimate relationship a man can develop with a wife to whom he is being sacrificially loving
    - That is the same level of relationship Jesus wants to have with each of us
    - And that is the love we can reflect back into the world, so everyone can see
      - There's a bond, so deep and so intimate
      - God's wants to have that with me? Yes

- But what about outside of marriage? What about at work, or school, or in leadership?

- How does this New Testament man, one who is sacrificially loving, translate outside of the bonds of matrimony?

- Philippians 2:1-8

Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it <sup>[b]</sup> robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

- Verses 1-2 are all preamble leading to one command, or better, plea

- If. . . if. . . if then, verse 2, fulfill my joy by

- 1. Being likeminded, 2. Having the same *love*, 3. Being of one accord, 4. Of one mind.

- Four times, Paul says "*all of you*" "*everyone do this!*"

- And right in the middle is the thing they are all supposed to be doing

- Love

- The emphatic request of verses 1 and 2 is that they all have the same love; then Paul goes into a description, a definition of what love means

- (Pay attention, this is a Biblical definition of love)

- Think of others more highly than yourselves

- That's it?
  - That's it
  - Simple concept, difficult execution
- Jesus is then exemplified as the ultimate archetype of this love.
  - In a nutshell
    - The highest and mightiest being
    - Brought himself to the lowest abasement. . . and died; died even for his enemies
- Love is
  - preferring another's needs before your need
  - Preferring another's desire before your desire
  - In marriage
    - Leadership still creates a responsibility to make God honoring decisions
      - But outside of moral choices and matters of wisdom
      - Husbands should prefer their wife's needs before their needs and their wife's desires before their desire's
  - In leadership
    - Your needs come after those below you
    - Your desires come after those below you
    - (Again, matters of morality and wisdom can trump)
  - With peers, siblings, everyone. . . it's what men are called to do
    - To emulate Christ
    - To be like the one man who got it right
    - We have to love. . . i.e. prefer, others before ourselves
    - That is the New Testament man, and it exposes the world to the love of God.
- But won't that make me a doormat?
  - Isn't a doormat's job to clean feet?
  - Isn't that what Jesus did as the example of love to his disciples?
- On some level we all know this is true, because we are drawn to these characters as heroes in movies
  - You know a good general in a story because he only sleeps when all his soldiers have beds; he only eats when all his men have been fed; and there's not a man he wouldn't die for.
  - You know a superhero because he'd be willing to sacrifice himself for *any other person*
  - You know a loving adventurer because he'll go do the hard thing that nobody else wants to do, simply because he knows that if he doesn't do it, someone else will.
    - You can believe we have these images because we are so influenced by Biblical imagery
    - Or you can believe that we are so moved by these images because on a deep level it resonates with us. On a deep level it reveals a bit of the love God has, and it is true.
- But how can we?
  - If the right has been taken away, how can we sacrifice?
  - I have good news for you men,
    - No man can take away what God has given you

- You can live out your life as though you have the right to withhold love, because God gave you the authority
- Then, and only then, can you live out the life of sacrificial love that God has called every man to!

Questions:

Armed with such a clear picture of what the New Testament man should look like

- Where in your life do you see that you are clearly preferring yourself to others?
- Where in your life do you see that you are getting it right?
- How can you gradually grow in your Christian walk to look more like Christ and less-like fallen man?
- Where in your life do you need to reclaim the “right” to love sacrificially?
- Look at 1 Cor. 13:4-7 and discuss; If I think of love as preferring others over myself how does it help me better understand why “love” is and does all the things in this passage?