

Leading Like Christ, Loving Like the Cross

Today's Reading: Ephesians 5:25–28; John 15:13 | Audio: Day 4

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

— Ephesians 5:25 (KJV)

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

— John 15:13 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

When Scripture speaks to husbands, it does not give a standard of domination. It gives a standard of sacrifice. Christ did not love the church casually, from a distance, or only when it was convenient. He loved with His body, His blood, His suffering, and His life.

Godly leadership is not about demanding that others recognize your authority. It is about bearing responsibility for those entrusted to your care. This applies first to husbands, but the principle speaks to every form of godly leadership. Whether you lead in a home, a ministry, or a workplace, the question is not, “Do people follow me?” but “Do I love them sacrificially?”

Leadership in the way of Jesus is not self-serving. It does not use people to build an image, hide behind a title, or demand honor while refusing responsibility. Jesus washed feet. Jesus touched the broken. Jesus carried the cross. Jesus gave Himself. That is the pattern.

Sometimes people want the position of leadership without the burden of love: the final word, but not the first sacrifice. Christlike leadership asks instead, “How can I serve? How can I help those under my care become more whole, more holy, more alive in God?” Real leadership costs more than people see—time, comfort, pride, the right to put yourself first.

In marriage this is especially important. A husband cannot use the language of headship while ignoring the example of Christ. If Christ is the model, love must look like giving, patience, protection, and sacrifice. Before demanding submission from anyone, every leader must first ask, “Am I loving with the totality of myself?”—not just with words, or provision, or presence in the room, but with active, sacrificial care.

And if you are not a husband or a formal leader, the call still stands. All of us influence someone, and all of us are called to carry the spirit of Christ.

DAY 4 • JOURNAL & RESPONSE

REFLECT

1. *If you are a husband: what would it look like to love your wife more like Christ loves the church?*

2. *If you lead children, a team, a ministry, or a household: where can you carry responsibility instead of shifting it?*

RESPOND: TODAY'S PRACTICAL STEP

- Write down three specific ways you can serve those you lead this week, rather than simply directing them.
- Choose one act of sacrificial love and do it today.

Three ways I will serve those I lead this week:

DAY 4 • PRAYER

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You are the perfect example of love and leadership. You did not dominate—You gave Yourself. Teach me to lead with humility, patience, and sacrifice. Show me where I have wanted authority without responsibility. Make my love more like Yours. Help me serve those entrusted to me with tenderness and courage. Let my life point others toward Your cross. In Jesus' name, amen.

My own prayer:

REMEMBER THIS

Christlike leadership gives before it asks.

Going Deeper: Philippians 2:5–8 • 1 Peter 3:7 • Colossians 3:19

This devotional is a tool for reflection, not a substitute for pastoral care or professional counseling. If what surfaces feels too heavy to carry alone, please reach out to a pastor or a trusted, qualified counselor at New Life Tabernacle Carrollwood.