

## **Ephesians 5:25-33 — What Does It Take For A Man To Be A Great Husband?**

**May 25, 2014**

Good morning CrossWinds. My name is Kurt and I serve as one of the pastors. We are in a series of studies in the book of Ephesians. It is a book with great news. It tells us how incredibly gracious and kind God is to us through Jesus. It describes us as the most blessed beings in the universe because of what God has done for us through Jesus. God could not bless us more than he already has through Jesus. The second half of the book tells us how we should live because of who we are.

This morning, we are in the second half of Ephesians, at the end of chapter five. Paul talked about the character quality of submission. When someone becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit produces joyful submission in our hearts to one another and those in authority over us. We care about the interests of others more than ourselves.

Paul illustrated what God's submission looks like in our everyday relationships. He showed us what Godly submission looks like in marriage between a husband and wife, in the family between parents and their children and on the job between employers and employees. Two weeks ago, we began studying these examples by looking at the way a godly wife pleases God. She is submissive and supportive of her husband's leadership in their home. Husbands are heads of their homes whether they like it or not. In Genesis, a wife was given to be her husband's helpmate. If a man marries a wife that is smarter than he is,

the good news is he has a wonderful counselor, but he is still responsible before God for his home.

If you missed that message on a woman's role in marriage, I encourage you to listen to it at [www.christ2Rculture.com](http://www.christ2Rculture.com). It is the other part of this morning's message. Taking one marital role apart from the other will not give you a balanced approach to marriage. They go together. One role is a left hand, the other is a right hand. They belong together.

This morning, we will pick up in Ephesians 5:25 with God's words to husbands. The question we begin with is, what is the most important thing a man needs to know to be a great husband?

### **[What Does It Take For A Man To Be A Great Husband?](#)**

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)

Right out of the gate we have the answer. Husbands, love your wives. Love them. Love them. Love them. Women like to be loved. They like somebody who pays attention to them. They like somebody who thinks they are special and cares about them. This is why ladies love soap operas. This is why they love romance novels. If they don't feel loved at home, they spend their time watching programs and readings books about love and romance. A wife needs a lot of love. Ladies are love receptors. Men, if you want to succeed as a husband, you must commit yourself to loving your wife.

**The command for a husband to love his wife was unexpected.** This simple command, for husbands to love their wives, doesn't sound abnormal, but in the ancient world, this was profound. If you were to survey the literature of the

Graeco-Roman world, you will not find any ancient writers telling husbands to love their wives. It is completely absent. Women were a type of property. They were acquired and used for children. Even the writings of the Jewish world were not favorable toward wives. The Jewish Rabbi Hillel, who lived at the time of Christ, taught a man could divorce his wife if she burned the dinner or grew unattractive to him in any way. Culturally, men were not expected to faithfully love a wife.

Paul's exhortation to husbands, that they should love their wives, is a longer section in the book of Ephesians than Paul's exhortation to wives that they should submit to their husband's leadership. The reason it is longer is because the command for a husband to love his wife was more countercultural than the command for a wife to submit to the leadership of her husband.

Two weeks ago, we learned marriage is not a cultural institution, it is a God-created institution. While we have civil unions in the eyes of the state, marriage was created by God in the book of Genesis to unite Adam and Eve into relationship with one another. God officiated the first wedding. The Bible ends with a wedding ceremony. It is the marriage of Christ and the church, the marriage supper of the lamb. God also officiates that wedding. Since God created the institution of marriage, he has the right to regulate it. He knows best what it takes for a husband and wife to succeed. This is why God defined marriage as between one man and one woman for life. It is not between two men and two women. God defines marriage. The state defines what constitutes a civil union. Why does God get to define marriage?

**Marriage is created to be a living a breathing picture of the relationship between Christ and the church.** The way a husband and a wife relate to one another runs parallel to the way Jesus relates to us, his church. Just as we submit to Christ's leadership in our lives, in the same way, a wife is to submit to her husband's leadership in their home. Just as Christ faithfully and sacrificially loves the church, in the same way a husband is to faithfully and sacrificially love his wife.

This is the source of marital roles. This is why marital roles are not arbitrary or reversible. Just as you cannot have the church dying for Jesus, you cannot have a wife assuming leadership over her husband and have the marriage work.

**This means a husband has the very high calling and responsibility to love his wife like Christ loved the church.** He is to love his bride like Jesus loves him. Just as Christ's love for us is constant, passionate and pursuing, a husband's love for his wife is to be constant, passionate and pursuing. When we are unlovely, does Christ love us any less? Absolutely not! In the same way, a husband must choose to love his wife even when she is unlovely. Husbands, we love our wives regardless of their behavior, health or appearance. Just as Christ loves us unconditionally. Husbands are to love their wives unconditionally. Christ literally died for us because he loves us. If necessary, husbands are to die for their wives, just as Christ died for them. The sacrificial love that was shown to us by Jesus is to be recreated and lived out in our love for our wives.

Most men will not need to die for their wives all at once but they will need to die the death of a thousand little cuts by denying themselves every day as they learn to deny themselves of free time, money, sleep, hobbies, and pleasures all to sacrificially love our wives and families.

Men, if you want to succeed as a husband, love your wife by sacrificing everything out of love for her, just as Christ sacrificed everything out of love for us.

Men, the only way to be a successful husband and father is to prepare to sacrifice deeply. I usually talk about this in premarital counseling. I ask a guy why he is marrying the woman he is seated next to in my office. Of course he tells me the reason he is marrying her is because he loves her. She is beautiful. She is hot. He can't stop thinking about her. At that point, one of the things I like to teach are the different Greek words for love. In English, we have one word for love. In Greek, they have multiple words that are used to describe the different types of love.



In most premarital situations, a husband is marrying his wife because he has *eros* and *storge* love for her.

- **Eros** in the Greek means erotic. It means somebody is really attractive. He or she really catches your eye because you find him or her sexy or foxy. There is nothing wrong with this. Just recognize it for what it is. It is sexual attraction. God gave us those desires.

- **Storge** love means a love for what you do for me. It is when somebody meets a need you have. I call this “hamburger love.” It is the love you have for your first hamburger off the grill at the beginning of summer. It tastes so good. We have a need. We are hungry. A hamburger meets that need by tasting so good. This storge love doesn’t just have to be for hamburgers. We have the need for friendship. We have the need to not be alone. Other people of the opposite sex can fulfill those needs. Like a special hamburger does an amazing job of meeting my physical hunger, a special person of the opposite sex can do a great job of meeting my relational hunger. That is usually why people get married.

Both *eros* and *storge* love are based upon what somebody does for us. They are self focused. They are meeting my needs. The problem is marriage cannot remain about eros and storge love. It must move on to what the Greeks called *phileo* and *agape* love or your marriage will end in divorce.

After a while, the eros love cools down when we get older and your spouse doesn’t look so hot after all the muscle that was up north turns into fat that has moved down south. Rather than meeting your friendship needs, life gets so busy you barely have time for one another. It is at that point that marriages fall apart. What are these two other types of love?

- **Phileo** is friendship love. It is not a love based upon meeting a need in me but it is about me choosing to be a friend to you. It is a choice to be a friend even if someone isn’t meeting your relational needs. If you are going through a hard time in your life, I will be there. I am your friend. When I moved into my first

home, it had a long dirt driveway. To cut down on the mud, I had a truck load of rocks a little smaller than my fist dumped in my driveway. The dump truck driver was supposed to spread them around my driveway but unfortunately he put most of them in a big pile by my barn. As a newly married man from the city, the only tools I had to spread several tons of rock around my driveway were a shovel and a garden rake. I spent a lot of time raking and shoveling those rock around my dirt driveway. On the day when the rocks were delivered, I found out who were my true friends. I invited many people for this backbreaking job of spreading rocks in the hot Saturday afternoon sun in July. Nobody showed up, except for one friend. He came over and spent the day sweating and helping me. He got nothing out of it, but he was there when I needed to lean on him. That is the kind of friend we need to be to our spouses. We are always there to help without complaining even when we get nothing out of it for ourselves. That is a phileo friend.

- **Agape** is love of rational choice. Some people call this God's love for us. It is love based on a conscious rational decision. It is showing love to a person when there is nothing that makes that person lovely to you. This is what God has done for us. Even while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He chose to love us when there was nothing lovely about us. Husbands are to love their wives in the same way. Even if there is nothing lovely about our wives, we choose to love them. It is love of choice. If you don't understand this, your marriage will fail. Erotic love will cool. Your wife will age and gain weight. There will come a time when you don't feel that your spouse is meeting a need

within you. If your marriage is only based on those first two types of love, it will fail because you will walk away. Every husband needs to understand this and prepare to face this. Love for our wives must be a conscious choice, even when your wife is not attractive and you are getting nothing in return, just as God made a conscious choice to love us and he got nothing in return.

Some of you know about my wife's health history. Shortly after giving birth to Deanna, our third child, Cindy came down with a form of lupus, an autoimmune disease. When the disease first came on, it left her exhausted. She couldn't get out of bed in the morning. She slept all day. She couldn't get warm. It took us months to diagnose. It is an incurable disease. She experienced constant exhaustion, and a side-effect of the disease is depression and irritability. The disease attacked her fingers. Her fingernails began turning black. The black rot moved from under her fingernails into the flesh of her fingers. The black rotting flesh on two of her fingers continued down her nail and was coming dangerously close to the palm of her hand.

I don't have a photo to show you. At that time of our life, nobody wanted to take pictures. The best way I can describe the rot on her two most diseased fingers is that the flesh of her fingers was black, shriveled and shrunken down to little more than the width of the bone in her finger. The remainder of her fingernail gave her fingers the outline of a black lollipop on thin black sticks. The rotting flesh of her fingers left her in constant agony and tears. The specialist we were working planned to amputate both of her fingers before the rotting flesh entered the palm of her hand. They discussed with us the possibility of her



disease taking her life if this rot began in her internal organs. I tell you this so you know, this was a tough season of our marriage.

At the time, we had three little kids. I was in a doctoral program plus was the solo pastor of a church. Cindy's mother was deceased. Cindy's father was out of the picture. My parents are elderly and live in Philadelphia. We had no family to help. Cindy was in constant pain, depressed, fearing for her life with not enough energy to get up off the couch. We faced that season alone. It was very hard to care for her, battle her constant depression, rally three kids to do the dishes, complete a doctorate and pastor a church. Cindy knows this, and I am not being disrespectful but honest. This was not a time when I came home and got anything out of marriage, because Cindy had nothing to give. Marriage was really hard. Others of you have gone through tough marital seasons worse than anything I endured. I only share my personal example because that is what I have to draw on.

During that season of my life, the verse I kept quoting was Ephesians 5:25. Husband, love your wife, like Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. My job is to love Cindy with the same unconditional and never-dying love Christ has for me. If I become so exhausted in the process that I die in the process of doing it, to God be the glory. I did what he called me to do.

Men, love your wives as Christ loved the church. That is the cornerstone of every marriage. It has nothing to do with your wife being sexy. It has nothing to do with her being passionate. If she frustrates you, you forgive her and love her anyway. I want to grab some guys by the neck and scream this verse at you

because when your wife gets moody, you get moody. When your wife sins against you, you sin against her. When your wife is broken and tired, you walk away. Husbands, love your wives. Just as Christ has not left you when you were a fool, don't you leave your wife or turn off your love when she is broken and foolish!

Paul teased out three implications of how a husband loves his wife. Two of them talk about how a husband is to love his wife in marriage. The last talks about how a husband loves his wife before marriage.

**When a husband loves his wife, he makes her lovely.**

...that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.  
Ephesians 5:26–27 (ESV)

Paul was running some between Christ's relationship to the church and a husband's relationship to his wife. We can learn a lot about the role of a husband from studying how Christ relates to the church.

What we learn is when Christ chose us, as his bride, we were not lovely. In fact, we were a disgusting bride.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (ESV)

Christ chose to love us when we were unlovely. Christ didn't just die for us, he set out to transform us and to make us lovely. He set out to make us beautiful, to clean us up.

Paul pictured what Christ is doing in us as a major beauty treatment. The more God works in our lives the more we understand God's amazing love for us,

and the more Christ-like we become. Using the analogy of a beauty treatment, we go from an ugly bride that looks like a Wicked Witch to a stunning bride that is flawlessly beautiful with no wrinkles and no blemishes all through Christ's love for us.

In the same way, when a husband loves his wife, like Christ loves the church, his unconditional love has a cleansing effect on her. A wife becomes more and more beautiful the more her husband loves her.

Men, your God-given role is to love your wife unconditionally, passionately and lavishly, like Christ loves you. When you love your wife like this, it will transform her and make her beautiful just as Christ's love for us transforms us.

It gets me angry when guys bust their wife's chops because she puts on a few pounds or because she look homely. Do you think your snide remarks are helping? Do you think being nasty or acting as a bully will lead your wife to change? Absolutely not! Bullying and nastiness are not the currency of her life. What is the currency of a woman's heart? It is love. Tell your wife how much you love her. Tell her how much you believe in her and how much you appreciate her. The more you love her, the more lovely she will be in attitude, actions and appearance.

In premarital counseling I always tell husbands they are thermostats and their wives are thermometers. She will reflect the temperature you set in the home. If she messes up and burns the meatloaf and you insult her and tell her she is a bad cook, she will cry and withdraw. For the next 10 years every time

she makes meatloaf she will think she is a bad cook because you told her she was. That won't change her. It will embitter her.

The other way you can handle burnt dinner is to stay calm. You tell her it is no big deal. You give her a hug and hold her tight while she sobs. You tell her it is no big deal and you are going to take her out for pizza and do the dishes for the burnt dinner. In that moment, she lifts up her head from between your arms, looks you in the eyes and tells you that you are the most amazing man in the world because you love her *even when she burns dinner*. For the rest of her life, whenever she makes meatloaf, she will remember your love and patience for her. Your marriage just became stronger, not weaker because the dinner was burned. Every marital crisis is an opportunity to step your marriage forward, not just backward. In those moments, love your wife like Christ loves you and your marriage will be stronger in the end. Your wife will become more lovely and more attractive.

I often hear guys tell me they married the wrong woman. Their wives was wonderful when they married but over time they transformed into beasts. One will say, "She is nasty and harsh. She has nothing nice to say and is given to fits of rage." When I hear that, it isn't a comment on the wickedness of a wife, it is a commentary on what a poor stinking job her husband has done to love her. Remember that she is a thermometer. If you set the temperature of nastiness, that is what you will get back from your wife. If you love your wife, unconditionally and passionately like Christ loves you, it will change her and she will become more lovely in character and reflect back to you the love she

receives. Husbands, you are the thermostat, she is the thermometer. You set the temperature in conflict and in marriage. She responds. You want to be loved by her, begin by loving her.

**When a husband loves his wife, he loves himself.**

In the same way husbands should love their 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 Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Ephesians 5:28–30 (ESV)

I love the way Paul reasoned. Guys, loving your wife is just loving yourself. Men, we need to be attune to the needs of our wife just as we are attune to the needs of our own bodies. Do you know when you are hungry? Do you know when you are tired? Do you know when you need help? As husband knows what he needs without having to verbalize it. In the same way a husband is to become attuned to his wife's needs so he can meet them without her needing to verbalize them. You can tell when she is tired. You can tell when she needs a hug. You can tell when she needs time with you. You can meet her needs without necessarily having to ask about what her needs are. You meet her needs like you are meeting your own needs.

Men, I know women are a mystery. This is not easy. Ladies, you can help your husband by verbalizing your needs to him and helping him become attune to them. It takes a lifetime of work for most husbands to tune themselves to their wives' needs, so ladies, help us in this direction.

The other thing that is important to remember is when men love their wives, they are just loving themselves. I see guys who spend their money on buying lots of big boy toys to make themselves happy. They buy bigger boats, a

big house, a faster car and slicker golf clubs all in hopes that if they spend enough time with their big boy toys it will make them happy. Do you want to be happy? Skip buying the toys and love your wife. Spend time with her. Romance her. Compliment her. If you are going out on the boat or going for a drive in the car, take her with you. The more you invest in loving your wife, the happier you will be.

I believe every guy should have something they can do with his wife besides make children. Cindy and I love to go to the gym. That is our time together. Some guys cook with their wives. Some ladies are into cars with their husbands. Find something you can do with your wife and do it together as friends. The more time you spend with your wife, the happier you will be.

This also means men are complete fools when they hit their wives. Do you like it when somebody slaps you in the face? Do you like it when somebody threatens you and pushes you on the couch? When you treat your wife that way, you are doing it to yourself. When beat your wife, the one who will suffer for it most deeply is you.

Some of you may have not hit your wife physically but you hit her verbally. Guys, how do you feel when somebody calls you a name with four letter words? Do you feel testosterone coursing through your veins? Do you want to feed somebody a knuckle sandwich? Guys, when you verbally punch your wife, you are hitting yourself. In a marriage, when a man verbally or physically hits his wife, in the end, he will suffer. You are a fool who hurts yourself.

### Why do I want to yell at my wife?

Men, we all have times when we want to lose it with our wives. It is tempting to use our power, our size and our voice to produce conformity. When you feel that way, you need to know where that desire to bully your wife comes from. Genesis 3:16 tells us how the curse of sin affects the marriage relationship.

Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. Genesis 3:16 (ESV)

Genesis 3:16 tells us that as a result of sin, a husband will rule over his wife. The word for rule is not headship, it is harsh rule. It is a hammer ruling over a nail by pounding it into place. Sin makes men want to pound their wives into place. That is not what Christ wants us to do. That is not how Christ wants husbands to change their wives. We change our wives, not by striking them into conformity but by loving them. Paul told us to nourish and cherish our wives.

**Nourish means to feed or take care of something, like a parent looks after a newborn child.** Whatever the child needs is what the child gets. Diaper changes, 3 a.m. feedings, you name it, we go out of our way to provide it for our kids. In the same way, a husband is to nourish his wife. Whatever she needs to be loved, whatever she needs to grow and blossom, that is what a husband goes out of his way to provide for his wife.

**Cherish means to care and protect.** It means to warm by cuddling. It implies protection and care and love. A husband is to protect his wife and wrap himself around his wife like a blanket, to keep her warm and protect her from anything that would hurt her in the world.

Then Paul moved on to how a husband loves his wife before marriage.

**A man loves his future wife by following God's pattern for marriage. Leave, cleave then conceive.**

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Ephesians 5:31 (ESV)

Young men, who aren't married, you need to start loving your future wife now. Too many young men never think about loving a wife until they are married. Paul quoted from Moses in Genesis. Jesus also quoted this verse. When you have Moses, Jesus and Paul saying the same thing, it is something we should notice. There is a pattern for a young man to follow on how he treats a woman and marries her. It is leave, cleave then conceive.

**Leave** — This means young men should focus on getting a job and being on their own. They should not focus on getting a dead-end job but the best job they can to provide for a future family. There is a difference between a boy and a man. A boy looks for people to provide for him. A man works to provide for himself and others. Many young men are still boys. Mom cleans up his room. Mom does his laundry. His girlfriend works while he stays home and plays video games. Boys eat snacks on the couch and can't hold a job.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 1 Corinthians 13:11 (ESV)

Boys are consumers. Men are producers. If you spend all your money on rims for your car to be trendy with your friends while you have a college loan, that is just foolish. Men, put away the childish things in your lives. Be in a position to give to others, not just take from others.



Young men, I challenge you to work your hardest at school so you can get a good job. Work hard while in school so you come out with the smallest loan possible to not burden your future wife and family. Young men, you will become the spiritual leaders in your homes and in your churches. This means you need to be reading your Bible every day. You need to be reading solid Christian books so you develop your thinking. Ten years from now, you will not be loving your wife if you spend all your time and money on spinning rims for your car now. You will be loving your wife by working hard, saving your money, paying your debts and knowing your Bible. You will soon be the spiritual leader in your home and in your church. Be good ones. Young men, your job is to leave a legacy with your lives.

**Cleave** — Cleave means to make a commitment. It means marriage. It literally means bonding materials together with glue. Today, we call it welding together two pieces of steel so they are indissolubly linked as one. That is a marriage commitment. That is what you do with a woman. Better or worse, richer or poorer, sickness or health, to death do us part. You commit to her like Christ commits to you.

Men, think about this from a woman's perspective.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel... 1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

1 Peter 3:7 says the wife is the weaker vessel. When a woman goes to the altar with you, she is trusting you will never hit her, cheat on her or kill her, that you will work hard to pay the bills so she can raise the children, you will never leave her so she raises your children by herself, you will love her if she

gets sick, you will love her if she loses her beauty, you will look after her if she is dying, you will be faithful when other women are interested in you. It is a scary thing to be a woman. This is why you make a rock solid commitment to a woman as a Godly man because you can be trusted. Then and only then do you make love to her and have children with her. That is conceive.

**Conceive** — Getting that order backward is not loving your wife. In addition, it means that when you are dating a woman, you love your future wife by not doing with a woman anything you would not be proud to tell your wife about on your wedding night.

Before your wedding night, you treat all other women like sisters, in absolute purity.

## **Conclusion**

Men, the most important thing you can do to be a great husband is to love your wife like Christ loved the church, sacrificing for her, forgiving her, passionately loving her, unconditional loving her. The more we love our wives, the more lovely they will become. The more we love our wives, the more we love ourselves and the better our lives will become. Single men, love your future wife by following God's pattern for marriage. Put away the childish things in your lives. Work hard, study hard, prepare a good home, save yourself for your wedding night and on your wedding day make a rock solid commitment to your wife so when she trusts her life into your hands, you are reliable. Then, and only then, do you make love to her and enjoy her beauty.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the EFCA. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics are preaching and ancient rhetoric. Feel free to contact him at [www.Christ2RCulture.com](http://www.Christ2RCulture.com).

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