

The Role of a Husband, part 2

Jeremy Cagle

February 21, 2021

Hello, everyone! Good morning and welcome to Grace Fellowship Chilliwack. It is so good to see you with us here today.

Before we get started in our sermon time, I just want to share some good news with you, and that is that starting next week, we're going to be getting back to something normal here as a church. It's so encouraging to say that word "normal" right now, and it's a word that's not used very often in our vocabulary nowadays. What's going to happen is that starting next week, we are going to be kicking off our children's Sunday school classes.

Once again, we are going to be kicking off our children's program here at the church. Some of our leaders have made some calls this past week and looked into that and discovered that that is allowed right now... that is being permitted by the government. So, we want to jump on that opportunity. Next Sunday morning, we'll be offering classes for children of all ages up to fifth grade in the gym next door to the sanctuary here where I'm preaching.

All children are invited to come along with one parent from their family. That's the way the ordinance is written: one parent per household is allowed to come while the other one stays home. But you'll want to do that; you will want to make this a priority. We're working really hard to make this an encouraging event for you. We're going to have Bible studies and games and crafts there. We're going to have teaching and music and fun activities for the kids. And it will last for about an hour or so from 11 o'clock until noon.

We want to give you enough time to watch the sermon in the morning, to spend that time with your family then come to the children's activity and get home in time for care group. We have a full day mapped out for you.

But I mean, as you know, these are strange times, aren't they? They are unusual, and they call for unusual methods. We would like for everyone to be able to come together right now, for the whole church to meet together as one. But if we can't do that right now, if that's not an option, then at least we can start with the children. At least we can start with the little ones. They are so important to us, they are so essential to all that we do.

It has been said that history will judge us by the difference that we make in the lives of children. It will judge us by the impact that we make with them because they are the future. They are the ones who will be here when we are gone. It can be so easy to overlook that because they're so small, we take them for granted, but they are not going to be little forever.

One day, they are going to look like us. One day, they're going to have homes and jobs and families of their own. They're going to have spouses and responsibilities and obligations just like we do, just like you and me. And so, the time to prepare them for that is now; the time to get the kids ready for who they will be in the future is today. You can't put that off.

Besides, I don't know about you, but I love watching my kids learn the Bible, don't you? I love watching them study the Word of God, hear the Word of God, read it, have it taught to them. And we have an opportunity to do that here as a church. That will start next Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. If you would like to be part of that, please

contact our church office and let us know and we will put you on the list. If you are a member of our church, we're going to be sending out an email with all the registration information on there.

And with that said this morning, while we're on the subject of children and the family, I want to invite you to turn in your Bibles to a book that has a lot to say about the family and that is the book of Ephesians. That is the book we are in this morning. We are looking at Ephesians chapter five.

As you are turning there this morning, as I've told you before, we've been in the book of Ephesians for about a year and a half now as a church. The theme of the book is that Jesus has come to save us...that's what Ephesians is all about. Jesus has come to rescue us from sins, and specifically, He's come to rescue our families from that. Come to rescue our homes from sin.

That's what our passage is about for today. And if you would look at this with me, I want to read it to you before we begin. If you look in Ephesians 5, starting in verse 14, Paul writes:

¹⁴For this reason it says,
“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord; ²⁰always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father; ²¹and subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

²²Wives, *subject yourselves* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰because we are parts of His body.

³¹For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless, as for you individually, each *husband* is to love his own wife the same as himself, and the wife *must see to it* that she respects her husband.

We're going to end the reading there. Just to say a few words about this, if you look in verse 14, which is at the beginning, it says this: For this reason, awake sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

That is a quotation from several books of the Old Testament. It's a quotation from Psalms and the book of Malachi. This is what you need to do in the Christian life. This is what you need to do in your marriage - you need to wake up. You need to "rise, oh sleeper".

Why? Because that's what Christ has done for you. That's what Jesus did when He saved you. He woke you up, He raised your soul from the dead. And now you need to act like it. Now you need to live like it in your family.

Because that's where you tend to sleep the most, isn't it? That's where we tend to doze off the most. When it comes to our family, that's the relationship that we check out on the most. We just sleep through it all. Paul says, you need to stop doing that. You can't be lazy in your family. To remind you of this and the build up to it in verse 14, he says you need to "wake up!" Rise and snap out of it.

Verse 15, says you need to be careful how you walk, that means cautious with it. You need to show some discernment. Show discernment when you're in the world, show discernment when you're in the church, show discernment when you're at home with your family.

Verse 18 says you need to be filled with the Spirit. Live a spirit filled life, walk in the Spirit, those kinds of things. And as you do that, as you apply all these things to your life, Paul says, it will do this. It will change your family, it will change the way you live in the home.

When you got saved, it didn't just impact you. It didn't just impact your life. It impacted the lives of those around you. When you came to Christ, when you believed on Him and put your trust in His name, it didn't just transform *you*. It didn't just revolutionize *you*. It did the same thing for the ones you love the most.

Did it for your wife, did it for your husband, did it for your kids. They may not have been saved at the same time you were saved, but they felt the impact of that in their lives. That's what this passage is all about. And if you look down at verse 22, it says, "Wives be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord". And verse 25 says, "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church."

You can tell there's an exchange taking place here, an interaction going on with members of the family. Down in chapter 6:1, you're going to read about children. And you are going to read in verse two about honoring your father and mother, just building on the whole idea of the home and family here.

We've talked about the wives in previous weeks, so I won't say much here, but to the husbands he says in verse 25, that they are to love their wives. I told you before, that is an interesting verse. It's unusual, because Paul says this is the husband's job in the home, this is what he's supposed to do. He is to love his wife.

In fact, this is so important to Paul, it's repeated five times in this chapter. Five times he tells husbands to love their wives, love their wives, love their wives, love their wives. And he says, in case you forget it, one more time, husbands love your wives.

He repeats it so much in here, you have to have it burned into your brain. As you read this, it's got to be stamped into your eyeballs. This is the kind of thing you wake up to in the middle of the night. What am I supposed to do as a husband? Love my wife.

That's how he writes this here. He doesn't tell wives to submit to their husbands, submit to their husbands, submit to their husbands, submit to their husbands. Doesn't say it that way. He doesn't tell children to obey your parents,

obey your parents, obey your parents. He doesn't repeat those commands like this. But he does repeat this one. He does say this one over and over and over again.

Some people say it's wrong for Paul to tell wives to submit to their husbands here. They say it's a very sexist thing, very demeaning. And they would probably be right, if that's the only command that he gave in this entire chapter, but it's not. He says way more than that, he gives husbands an even higher command than the wives, an even greater command. They are to love them as Christ loved the Church.

You can't get any higher than Christ in the Christian life, can you? You can't get any greater than Him. And you can't get any greater than His love. You can't get any greater than His sacrifice. That is the cream of the crop, that's the top of the mountain for us. Jesus loved us to the point of death, He loved us to the point of the cross.

And now a husband needs to love his wife that way. Doesn't need to love her like the guy next door. Doesn't need to love her like his father, grandfather, or great-grandfather. He's to love her like Christ. That's the standard. That's his role model.

Want to know how to love your wife? Look at Jesus. Want to know how to treat your wife? Look to Him. This is what makes Christianity so different from the world, by the way. This is what makes a Christian home so different from a worldly one.

It's not because of the furniture. You don't go into a Christian home and look at the furniture and say, "Oh, that's a Christian home". It's not because of the windows and the paint on the wall. It's not because of the decorations and the drapery and the appliances, none of that stuff. The difference is that we love each other.

The difference between a Christian home and a worldly home is how we treat each other in grace and truth and kindness. Because when there is a problem we're not supposed to yell and holler and scream like the world does. When there's an issue we're not supposed to cuss and fight and squabble like the rest of mankind.

The Chilliwack Progress has put out an article recently that said that while a lot of crime has gone down in our town due to the Coronavirus, domestic violence is going up. Crime in the home has risen and the reason is because we're around each other all the time. We can't go out and do anything. So we're getting on each other's nerves and butting heads and fighting. Shouldn't be that way in a believer's home. There should be a difference.

Doesn't mean we don't argue, doesn't mean we don't fight, but we handle it differently. And Paul says here that it starts with the husbands. It begins with a man of the house because they are supposed to be the best at this. They are supposed to be the best at loving others in the home.

Lot of homes when you think of who loved you the most you think of mom, right? You think of the lady in the house because ladies are very skilled in this department. But this says men should be as well. Men are often known for fixing things and repairing things and throwing a good barbecue because that's a very manly thing to do. It's very masculine. But this is the most masculine thing of all: we need to take care of our families.

I mentioned this because a lot of men don't get this today because they have such a low view of marriage. They only think about themselves. Their minds are totally consumed with their work or their hobbies, which is why you see so much domestic violence today. It's why you see so many broken homes.

For some men, it's even worse than that, they don't have any view of marriage at all, they hardly even think about it. They are not leading their homes on any level. The wife is leading the home, or the kid is leading the home. The children are telling the parents what to do. That sort of thing.

None of that is okay for a believer. Paul says none of that is okay for a man of God. The husband needs to lead, he needs to give his home direction, and it needs to look like this. He's not to be bossy or domineering. He's not to be a bully. He needs to do it in love.

And this is so confusing today. We're going to talk about this in weeks to come. But the idea of the family has gotten so twisted nowadays. A lot of specialists and psychologists say there are no roles in the home anymore. They say there are no distinctions. It's all a free-for-all, you can do whatever you want. They say this idea of the family is finished.

You know, in recent years, it's gotten so bad that we've started electing people onto the school board who say that, who believe that there are no roles in the home. There are no roles and sexuality anymore, which is frightening to think about.

But the good news is, that doesn't impact God's view of this. The good news is it doesn't change what He thinks about the family. Because this is a settled thing in heaven; it's not going anywhere. You could elect 100 people on the school board; you'll still have this. You could elect 1000 people or a million people on there, it won't change a thing in the Bible.

This is God's view of the home. And you could add that He believes you can do this. You could say that God would not have put this in the scriptures if He didn't think this was a possibility in your life. If you are in Christ, you can make this happen. This is not some kind of pipe dream. Your home can look this way.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things have passed away. And behold, new things have come." And the word "old" there, it means the old nature or the sinful way of doing things. Jesus has come to do away with that now. He's come to change that and give you a new way of looking at the home. It looks like this. Looks like the family. Looks like God's view of the family.

I'll never forget the time I met with a young couple, several years ago, who just got married. They had just started living together as husband and wife, when the man said to me, "How can I be a godly man when I come from such a terrible family?" He said, "how can I be a godly husband when my dad was such a mess?" And I said, "you can do that, because you're a new man now. You can do what this says because you come from a different family now. You come from the family of God."

My friends, isn't that encouraging to hear? Don't you need to be told that this morning, you come from the family of God, you're a new creature in Christ? So, all this can be yours as a man of God. And that's what we're going to talk about today. If you're taking notes this morning, in Ephesians 5, we're going to look at three more duties for the role of a husband in this passage. That is our outline for today.

In Ephesians 5:27 and following, we are going to look at three more duties for the role of a husband. We talked about this last week. We want to continue our study of this because you can't say enough about the role of a husband because it's so distorted today. It's such a twisted thing in our society. But it doesn't have to be, this is a very clear passage. It tells us exactly what husbands are supposed to do. We just need to study it and put it into practice. So, let's do that this morning with three more duties of a godly husband.

The first one is that a husband should love his wife as his own body. He should love her in a thoughtful way. He should love her in a considerate way, considering her needs above his own, because that is what you do with your own body. You love your body very considerately, very thoughtfully.

And if you read on in verses 22, it says,

“Wives, subject yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also as the head of the church, He himself being the Saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh,”

We'll stop our reading there for the moment. You know, as you read that, you can tell that Paul gives a lot of details to the husbands here. He gives a lot of information to them, way more than the wives. He gives the wives three verses in here, but he gives the husbands nine verses...way more.

And the reason why is this was so revolutionary at the time. It was so unusual that Paul had to do that, because nobody treated their wives like this. In the first century, nobody did anything like what he was describing here, so he had to go into detail. You know, at this time, it was a very male centered society, so husbands would ignore their wives, take them for granted. In some cases, they would beat them, abuse them, or mistreat them.

In fact, the term “domestic abuse” or “spousal abuse”, are relatively new terms in human history. Didn't exist in the first century, because nobody thought twice about abusing their wife. It was so bad that one ancient author said this. “If you catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you can kill her because she has no rights”.

Women at the time could not testify in a court trial. They could not hold jobs that a man could have. In some societies they were not allowed to be educated very much. That is the world Paul is writing to here. That is the culture he's speaking into, which is why he had so much to say about this for the husbands.

And just to review what he said to them: He says in verse 25, that a husband should give himself up for his wife the same way Jesus did. Means he should make a sacrifice for her. He should sacrifice everything. Verse 26 says he should sanctify her because that is what he should give up. He should bring her closer to God any way that he can by cleansing her by the washing of water with the Word.

Verse 27 says this, just to elaborate on that. It says that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. You know, we all know it is a tradition of wives to make themselves beautiful on their wedding day. It's a tradition for them to make themselves as lovely as possible in order to present themselves to their husbands. They want to make a good impression.

And Paul says, Jesus does that for us here. He presents us to Himself in all our glory. And a husband should do the same for his wife. It's a heavy thing to think about, but he's showing the depth of the responsibility that a husband has to take care of his wife. Deep stuff, very serious.

And then in verse 28 he says this, just to add one more command for husbands. He says, “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies”. In other words, Paul takes it to another level. Now he raised the stakes even higher because he says a husband should love his wife as his own body or as his own skin. It's a pretty significant thing to say, if you just pause for a moment and think about this.

There is nothing closer to you than your own skin, is there? There's nothing that's closer to you than your own flesh. I mean, your flesh goes with you wherever you go, it's a part of who you are. It's a part of your DNA. It's part of your makeup. You can't even turn around without it following you.

Paul says this is how closely a husband should do this. This is how closely he should love his wife. He should do it like his own flesh, like his own skin. You can interpret this several different ways. For one thing, this means that when a man marries a woman, she becomes a part of his skin in a sense, becomes a part of his family, his household. She leaves her former household, she leaves her former family, and she becomes part of his.

Paul says, out of respect for that, a husband should love his wife. You should appreciate the fact that a woman like that would want to be with a man like you. You should honor her for the sacrifices she made in being part of your family.

This also could be interpreted this way: When a husband marries a wife, she becomes his closest friend on earth. She becomes his closest companion because that's what your flesh is. That's what your body is. That's the analogy here. That's the comparison. Your wife is stuck to you like glue now. She's inseparable from you.

Had a friend several years ago going through a divorce. He said, “What should I do?” I said “You should do all you can to stop it. And here's why: you're not breaking up with a girlfriend. You're getting a divorce. She is part of your flesh and you're about to rip it apart. You got to try to stop it.”

This verse goes on and says, “for no one even hated his own flesh”. And Paul writes this to show the insanity of neglecting to do this for your wife. He says it is like hating your own flesh. It is like hating your own person. Nobody wins when you do that. Nobody gets ahead when you don't love your wife.

You might think you're getting ahead, you might think you're buying some time or something like that, saving some energy... you're not. Everybody loses. It's an unnatural thing to do. It's unnatural when a husband does not love his wife.

I've counseled men and women who were so mad at each other, they were so angry, that they couldn't even talk to each other. They couldn't look at each other in the face when they came in the counseling room. And I will tell you, it's unnatural. It's awkward at the highest level.

That's not the way God intended marriage to be. That's not the way He intended the family to be. It's like hating your own flesh. Doesn't make any sense to hate your own flesh, hit your own flesh, beat your own flesh. Who does that? Nobody does that. It's the same way here.

You know, it's interesting, as you read on in this passage, the stakes just keep getting higher and higher, don't they? If you read from verse 25 all the way through to the end, they just keep climbing up and up and up.

Before, the husband was to give himself up for his wife. Before, he was to make a sacrifice for her, which is a lot... to do this the way Christ did. I can't think of anything higher than that. Then he is supposed to help sanctify

her. He's supposed to help cleanse her from sin, which is also an extremely high sacrifice. Very difficult thing. And now he is to take it a step further and do it as if he is doing it for his own flesh.

I mean, Paul is just building sacrifice upon sacrifice here and it leads to several ways to apply this to our lives. For one thing, this means there is no limit to the kind of love a husband should have for his wife. No boundaries, no restrictions. You can never love her enough. It's just not possible. You can never give enough for her because you can never give like Christ.

There is nothing you should not do for your wife, because there is nothing you wouldn't do for your own skin. There's nothing you wouldn't do for your own body. If you think about it, you would do anything for your body, wouldn't you? You don't even have to think about it, it just comes natural to you.

If your body is hungry, you feed it. If your body is thirsty, you give it something to drink. If it's cold, you put on a jacket. If it's hot, you turn on the AC. If it's tired, you take a nap. It's just natural to you. We take care of our bodies instinctively.

And Paul says this is the same way here. It's the same way in marriage. A husband should take care of his wife instinctively. He should do it without having to be told to do it. Not by becoming a doormat for her. That's not the idea here. And it's not that he lets her boss him around and she becomes the head of the home. He's supposed to cleanse her by the washing of water with the Word, that's what this is talking about.

A husband should do all he can to help his wife grow in her walk with God. So if she's struggling with something, if she's wrestling with something she's read or heard or come across in the Bible, he should drop all he's doing to help her. He should make any sacrifice to help her think through that. Or if she's bothered by something she saw in the world, or in society, he should do the same.

The idea is that there is no sacrifice too great. There is no sacrifice too great to help her in this way. I've heard some men say, you know, "I can't lead my wife this way. I can't help her like this because I don't have the time to do it. I'm too busy". And yet they have enough time to watch TV two hours a night. They have enough time to spend two hours a day looking at the latest scores from the NHL.

Or they say that, you know, "I can't do this. I can't help her like this because I'm not smart enough. I don't know enough Bible. I'm not intelligent enough." And yet they are smart enough to run their own business. They're smart enough to be at the very head of their company at work.

My friends, the problem is not that you are not smart enough. The problem is that you are lazy. Sorry to be so blunt. But that needs to be said. The problem is not that you don't have enough time. The problem is that you are selfish with the time that you have.

You're only thinking about yourself, and you need to stop. This is way more important than your job. This is way more important than what's going on in the NHL. Your wife is more important.

Another way to apply this to our lives is that this means there is no break from this either. There's no rest or vacation from what Paul is talking about. There's no rest from your body. You don't get a vacation from your skin.

You don't get to say to your body, "well, I'm not going to feed you today because I did that yesterday. Remember? Yesterday you had a ham sandwich. Yeah, that should tide you over until next week. You don't do that with your

body. Nobody does that. You don't say, "well, I'm not going to give you any water either, because I gave you some water 10 hours ago." You do it every day.

You take care of your body all the time. And it's the same way with your wife. She is no different. Really shows you the depth of what Paul is talking about here and the commitment. This is an ongoing thing. That's the point of the analogy. It's an everyday thing.

Some men tend to think, "If I do so many good things for my wife, or at home, it gives me a pass to do something else. It gives me a pass to have some me time." There's no "me time" in this passage. There's no selfishness in here.

Some men think "If I do so many good things for my wife, if I treat her in a certain way, then I can get to go blow off some steam and sin". No, you don't. Not from this. You love your wife like your own body at all times. Of all the problems I deal with as a pastor, this is one of the worst, which is why we are dealing with so much application here. This is one of the problems I come across so often, because I see so many marriages.

I've talked to so many marriages where the wife is the only one who wants to do this in the home. She's the only one who wants to do anything spiritual as a family. She's the only one who wants to pray together. She's the only one who wants to read scripture together. She's the only one who wants to talk about things of the Lord. The husband doesn't want to do any of that. He's just not interested.

Or in some cases, she's the only one who wants to come to church. She's the only one who wants to attend services. And she does it all alone, all by herself, so that when she has a spiritual problem, she brings it to us. When she has a spiritual issue, she comes to myself or one of the elders, and we're happy to help her.

But what Paul is saying here is it's not just our job. What he's saying here is when it comes to spiritual problems in the life of your wife, it's your job as well, as a husband, to help her deal with that. We'll do all we can as well. But you need to step up. You need to wake up and start leading her in love.

One commentator says there's something wrong when a man regards his wife as the one who cooks meals, washes clothes, cleans the house, but nothing more. There's something wrong with a man who looks at his wife as a personal servant, or someone who exists just to do whatever he wants, because she is so much more than that. She is part of his flesh. And he needs to learn how to treat her that way.

It's well said, and we all need to take that to heart this morning. And it leads to another duty of a godly husband in this passage. The first duty is that he should love his wife as his own body, which means he should love her as thoughtfully as he can. He should love her in a considerate manner because we do that with our own bodies. We're very thoughtful toward our own skin. You should have the same attention toward her.

Another duty of a godly husband is that a husband should love his wife in a nourishing way, in a cherishing way. Which means that he should love her gently as well. He should love her as tenderly as he can. Paul is explaining what it means to love her as his own body.

He goes on and he says this if you look in verse 28: "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church because we are members of his body."

You know, as you read that, you are kind of reminded of the way Paul writes his letters. If you have read the letters of Paul before, in the New Testament, you'll know that Paul had a very unique way of writing. He just kind of piled one thought on top of the other as he wrote. He kind of just stacked one idea on top of the other... there wasn't always a clear flow to things. He just sort of talked about them as they came to mind.

And as you read through Ephesians 5, what you see is he goes from talking about marriage to talking about Jesus, to talking about marriage again, and back and forth, back and forth. Next week, we are going to spend an entire week on what he says about Jesus in here. I'm going to unpack that for you.

Right now, we're just focusing on what he says about marriage. What he says here is that no one ever hated his own flesh in marriage but nourishes and cherishes it. That phrase "nourishes and cherishes" is a term of affection here. It's a term of endearment.

Because when you love someone, when you care about them, this is what you do. You don't treat them like everybody else. You don't treat them any way you want. You treat them differently. You treat them in a unique way. Some of the worst marriages I've ever seen are ones where the man treated the woman like everybody else, treated her just like anybody he knows. Can't do that. Have to treat her special.

In the phrase "nourish and cherish", it literally means to warm something up and to provide for it. It means that whatever your wife needs, you provide. Whatever she requires, you get it if you can. And the way it is worded here, it is not just physical, this is an emotional thing. It's a spiritual thing for her.

As we all know, you can't treat a woman the same way you treat a man. You can't talk to her and respond to her and listen to her the same way you do with a man, because she's not the same. She's not just like you are, she's different. And you have to respond accordingly. And even to dive into this some more, the word "nourish" here, it means you need to feed her, or nourish her mind or her soul anyway you can.

Remember, he's talking about cleansing her by washing her with the Word and that's the idea. And the word "cherish", it literally means to keep something warm, because that's how you need to do it. That's how you need to talk to your wife, you need to do it in a warm way. You need to do it in a caring way that says, "I love you".

It's not just what you say, it's how you say it. Paul is writing with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit here. Paul is a single man who was not married. He shows amazing insight into marriage and what it's like, by the power of God's Spirit.

You shouldn't talk to your wife in a cold way. You shouldn't interact with her in an icy, frigid way, with no emotion at all. It's got to have some feeling to it. One of the worst mistakes you can make is to talk to your wife with no emotion and feeling.

This doesn't mean that you have to have a date night every night of the week. It doesn't mean that you have to have a three-hour conversation every night before going to bed, and a long walk by the beach, and all that sort of thing. But it means you need to do it sometimes. It means you need to do it every once-in-a-while. You need to have a date night, once a week, or some kind of regular time together where you're interacting like this.

You have to do things that she would like to do as well. My wife has told me that one of her favorite dates that we ever went on was a time I took her ice skating and went on a roller coaster with her. And the reason she said she liked that so much is because I'm terrible at those things. I get motion sickness and I'm scared of heights. And I'm

really bad on skates. But she liked it because I did it for her. She liked it because I did it as something that she would enjoy.

And that's the idea of what Paul's talking about here. But it even goes farther than that. Because as you're talking about spiritual things with your wife, as you're doing Bible studies and those kind of things with her, you've got to do it this way. You got to do it with some affection.

Some men are so oblivious to this today. They're so blind to what Paul is talking about here because they try to treat their wives like everyone else. Like I just said, they try to treat them like another man or like their buddy at work. It's like they think they have a roommate in the house. Friends, you don't have a roommate, you have a wife. She's not one of your buddies. So, you can't talk to her that way.

Some women are oblivious to this as well. They're blind to this distinction because they try to treat their husbands like a woman. They try to treat him like they would one of their girlfriends. They want to have a date night every night, or a very, very long conversation, and he's not wired that way. And they get frustrated.

But the whole idea Paul is saying here, is there needs to be some give and take in the relationship. You've got to be able to have a sense of selflessness about how you interact with each other. I Peter 3:7 has an interesting perspective on this when it says, "you husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way".

That means you should live with your wives in a studious way or a scholarly way because you should study them like a book. You should study them like you are getting ready for a test. You need to know what she's like when she's happy or sad, when she's feeling high or feeling low, when she's struggling with something.

No one should know your wife better than you. No one should understand what she's going through better than you do. It's your job. That's what you signed up for as a husband.

And it leads us to one more point to consider, one more duty of a godly husband. The first one is that a husband should love his wife as his own body. Should love her as thoughtfully as he can, as considerably as he can. Like his own flesh in his own skin.

Second, he should love her in a nourishing way, in a cherishing way, which really describes the tone of this, and the way it's supposed to impact her. He should be tender in the way he talks to her, he should be gentle in the approach, remembering the woman that God has called her to be. Remembering that she is different. Praise the Lord.

It would be miserable if you married someone just like you, wouldn't it? But you didn't. Despite what some may tell you today, men and women are different, aren't they? They're not the same. Shouldn't even have to say that nowadays, should be self-evident. But it's not. These are weird times. But they are made different in the image of God. We need to respond accordingly.

The final point here for this morning, and one more duty of a godly husband, is that he should love her in a cleaving way. I'll explain that here in a second. It means that he needs to leave and cleave to her. That's a common expression we use in biblical counseling circles. He needs to leave his own family, leave his own household, and cleave to her to make a new one.

Some say that he needs to “leave, cleave, and weave”. Needs to put his life together with hers as one, which is exactly what this text says. If you start in verse 28 again, it says “so husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of his body. And for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I'm speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

I won't say too much about this, because we're going to talk about it next time. We're going to spend an entire sermon on the last part of this chapter. But as Paul goes on here, he summarizes what he said before. He quotes from the Old Testament in verse 31, to say that “for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

That's a quotation from Genesis 2:24, to show you how old all of this stuff is, to show you how far back it goes. You know, when Paul is writing all this stuff, about a husband and a wife, again, it was so new to the Ephesians, so foreign to them, he had to remind them this is the way God created it to be. This is the way He made it.

Paul's not just coming up with this; he's not pulling it out of thin air. It was this way from the beginning. Because in Genesis 2 right after the first marriage in human history, when Adam married Eve, it says that this was God's intention for marriage. This is what he wanted to do with it. He wanted to start a family with it.

Marriage has a higher calling. It's not just about the man and the woman. It's a major part of it. But it's about the family they're going to create. God was going to use the institution of marriage to be the basis of all human relationships. Before, a man was part of his parents' family; before, he was part of their household. Now that he's married, he becomes part of hers too. They go together. They become their own.

This is very interesting, because God said that, actually, before Adam and Eve even had any parents. When it says (verse 31), “for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother”, Adam and Eve didn't even have a father and mother, they were just created.

If you remember the story, Adam was made out of the dust of the ground, Eve came from one of Adam's ribs. But God said this even to them to show them this is where all this is heading. This is where the family is going. It will lead to the establishment of a home.

And what this means practically, is that when a man marries a woman, he needs to cleave to her. He needs to leave his former way of life behind in order to start a new way of life with her.

Listen, men, when you get married, you are no longer a single man anymore. You no longer live for yourself anymore. That way of life is over, you gave it up at the altar. Same thing goes for the wife. In other words, you have to be all into this.

You have to be entirely committed to the marriage. You can't have one foot in and one foot out. You can't have one toe in and one toe out, you got to take the plunge. You got to take the leap. This means a wife has to do this as well. It's for both sides, she has to make the same commitment.

A wife can't get on the phone and talk to her mother every time she has an argument with her husband. She can't get on the phone and talk to her dad every time they get into a fight, she needs to talk to the husband first. And the

same goes for him. They don't need to call home, they are home. They don't need to go home to get some help, they are home. They have to act like it.

You know, when you counsel young couples and help them get started in marriage, one thing you find is that this is often a struggle. They have a hard time leaving their old family behind. They have a hard time cutting ties with them. The wife still thinks she's under her father's authority, or the husband still thinks that he is. He wants to keep going back to mom and dad.

Obviously, the Bible says you should honor your father and mother. You should hold them in high esteem. And that's a command for your entire lifetime. You should always hold their wisdom in high esteem. But at the same time, it also says this.

The Bible also says that when you get married, you are starting your own family now. When you get married, you are starting your own household. And there needs to be a change in your prior relationships. There needs to be a shift. You let go of that and now you embrace this.

It's a beautiful thing about marriage. It's the wonderful about it. They share the same last names, share the same house, share the same food, share the same clothes, share the same everything, because that's what they are now. The two have become one... one flesh.

Verse 32 says "this mystery is great, but I'm speaking with reference to Christ and the church". That means that Paul is writing this to talk about something deeper here. He's writing this to illustrate a deeper truth about Christ and the church. And again, we will talk more about that next week. That's what we're going to focus our attention on then.

But for now, men, since this was addressed to you husbands in the room, let me just ask you, as you look back at this passage, and you think about this, how are you doing with this today? How are you doing with all this stuff about loving your wives and treating them the same way Christ did the church?

Are you doing well? Do you feel like you got this nailed? Or do you feel discouraged as you read over the text and consider it? Can you say honestly say that you love her like your own body? You love her like your own flesh? Can you say that you nourish her, and cherish her, and your conversation always has a warmth to it and a tenderness? Do you treat her like she is special to you? Do you treat her like she is your closest relationship on earth?

In fact, to drive this point home even more and get even more personal, if I were to ask you what is your closest relationship on earth, what would you say? If I were to ask you what is your closest friendship, would you say her? Would you say that your wife is?

I asked you that because if not, that needs to change this morning. If you would say that she's not your closest relationship on earth, you need to repent of that. You need to see how much of a sin that is because that is not the way God intended marriage to be.

He has called you to be one with your wife. There is no other person on earth, that you have been called to do that with. You've been called to be joined together, united together, become one family. And this is the only person in all the world that that is said about.

So, you need to make this a priority. She's not your roommate. She's not your servant, none of those things. She is your wife. And you are to treat her with this high calling.

You know, in my studies this week, I was reminded of the time a seminary professor told us a story of a time he was studying I Peter 2:16, which says, "Do not use your freedom as a cause for evil, but use it to be a slave of God."

And he said that at the time he read that, he was pastoring a small church and getting his doctorate and he had a small family, had three little kids at home. He said, "my life was crazy. It was nuts. But every day when I came home, he said, I would make it a habit of stopping around the corner from my home.

I would stop at this big tree right around my driveway. And in my mind, I would put on the apron of a slave. And I would go home and serve my family. I would put it all on hold, I would lay it all aside to be a husband, and a father, to them".

My friends, I tell you that story, because we all need to do that today. All the men in our church, all the men listening to this, you need to get in the habit of laying everything aside, putting it all on the shelf and putting on the apron of a slave, to go home and serve your family. Will you do that today?

Will you make it a priority to do that this morning? That's what the Lord has called you to do. And that's what He has enabled you to do by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me pray for you now and ask for God's help in this area.

Father, we do thank you for this high calling You have given us as husbands. On one hand, Lord, we read this passage, and we are intimidated by it. These are things that none of us can ever achieve perfectly in this lifetime.

But at the same time, Father, you have enabled us to grow into this. This is not a fantasy. This is not make-believe. This is something we really can do through the power of what Jesus Christ has already done in us. And so, Lord, I pray for the men in our church. I pray for the men who are watching this, Lord, that you would give them just a taste of this high calling, so their marriages would change.

I pray they would become the men you have called them to be as Christians. Lord, would our homes be different as a result of what we've learned today? Would our hearts be different and changed?

And I do pray for the wives as well as they read this, that they would in no way become embittered. Because maybe they think their husbands are not doing these things. They would in no way think they need to take over the home or anything like that. But they would pray for their men. They would love them and bring them before the throne of God.

Lord help us to please You in all these things. May we change into the likeness of Christ as a result of what we heard today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.