

**Intro.     Read E 5:22-33**     Where is the glory of marriage? What is the glory of marriage? Marriage as described and explained in the Bible continues to be viewed by the culture at large as both radical and confining. We are all too familiar with the creative and painful ways that the marriage covenant is assaulted and disrespected. The original readers of the Ephesian letter had to be shocked, almost afraid when they were given this new and radical perspective of marriage that we have just read in these verses.

As is true today, there was a huge distance between how people lived and what God had designed regarding marriage and family roles. Women in general were regarded as property without legal rights. A man could divorce or dismiss his wife for any reason. Wives were expected to run the home, produce and care for children and nothing more. Husbands were expected to find companionship elsewhere. Sexual immorality was rampant and marital fidelity was mocked. Divorce and remarriage was common to the extent that it was not uncommon for a woman to have more than 10 husbands in her lifetime.

If marriage has or had any glory, it has been buried and distorted by selfishness and ungodliness. Even in the church culture, marriage is viewed as something important to God but primarily for the happiness of the people involved. The church and majority culture appear to agree that the essential problems of marriage can be cured through compatibility, communication and counseling. Marriage appears to be in trouble. In our culture it has taken on a utilitarian shape that attracts those who desire companionship, want a family and need to satisfy the expectations of family or church in doing so. Where is the glory of marriage? What is the message of marriage that compels us to honor God by building radically different marriages?

The glory of marriage is the gospel. The message of marriage is that God's love and grace through Christ are sufficient to restore lives broken by sinful rebellion to complete submission and love. What sin damaged and distorted in turning people against God and each other is restored by God's promised grace in Christ Jesus. Your marriage helps unravel the mystery that God is redeeming a people to himself through the sacrifice of his Son Jesus.

Our study began by looking at verses 22-24 and the first aspect of a marriage that preaches the gospel . . . wives submitting to their husbands. The most basic components of a gospel focused, God pleasing marriage are wives submitting to the husband and husbands loving the wife. It is summarized in 5:33 as love and respect.

Let's review quickly the 1<sup>st</sup> component of submission before addressing the husband's responsibility of loving his wife. As relationships are impacted by the gospel, the marriage relationship starts with instructions for the wives.

In his book [This Momentary Marriage](#), John Piper defines submission by the wife as:

*... "submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts. That's what we see here as well. It's the disposition to follow a husband's authority, and an inclination to yield to his leadership. It is an attitude that says, "I delight for you to take the initiative in our family. I am glad when you take responsibility for things and lead in love. I don't flourish in the relationship when you are passive and I have to make sure the family works."*

The two standards used to define submission are stated ‘as the church submits to Christ’ and ‘in everything.’ The verse begins with an adversative – now or but – to indicate that the husband is not the savior of the wife however the wife still needs to submit. The major emphasis of submission in this model is the willing and voluntary nature of it. The church looks to Christ in a willing, responsive, joyful and complete manner.

1Peter 3:1-7 teaches three specific dimensions of this willing and voluntary response of honoring and affirming her husband in submission.

Holy heart before external beauty.	3:3-5
Hope in God rather than husband, home or career.	3:5-6
Courageous trust in a faithful creator.	3:5-6 3:14; 4:19

The first component of a gospel preaching marriage is submission of the wife to the husband. This proclaims and mimics the voluntary and willing response of the church to her Lord Christ. Those who once were in rebellion against Christ and participated in his death now willingly affirm and respond to his authority. Is it possible to submit to authority? Is it satisfying? Is it meaningful? Watch holy hopeful wives to see answers in real time and living color.

**The second component of a marriage that preaches the gospel is that of husbands loving their wives.**

Note that though headship is taught in v.22-24, the next thought is not to exhort husbands to rule over their wives. Nowhere is the husband commanded to exercise his headship in a dominant or harsh manner. It is clear though that headship is to be exercised in sacrificial love for the wife.

5:25-33 teach husbands that their love for their wives has a direct relationship with Christ’s love for his church. Remember the church is not a building but it is people who have been saved by God and placed into this union with God and other saved people. The church is people who have been restored from their sinful rebellion and slavery to submission and freedom in Christ. Christ’s love and commitment to his people is held up to husbands in these verses as both the model and the cause for their love for their wives. It is the Christ like and Christ induced love seen in the husband’s love that preaches the message of marriage so clearly. The glory of marriage is the life transforming love of Christ for his people, the church.

Note how the paragraph is formatted to draw our attention to both the example of Christ’s love and the motivating force of his love that causes us, especially husbands, to mimic his love for us.

Husbands, love your wives.	5:25a
Example and motivation – as Christ loved the church.	5:25b-27
Husbands, love your wives.	5:28a
Example and motivation – as yourself.	5:28b-32
Summary of marriage message.	5:33

**Four necessary ‘wow’ moments for loving husbands:**

## Four necessary 'wow' moments for loving husbands:

The overwhelming issue that a husband must grasp in fresh ways is the love of Christ for people who have been saved by God. Christ is referenced repeatedly in this marriage paragraph along with several specific ways he has demonstrated his love for people. The husband who is passive about Christ is passive with his wife and children. A man who does not actively pursue Christ does not have the stamina or grace to actively and vibrantly love his wife. The husband who has given up on knowing Christ better has also given up on understanding his wife.

The secret to being a loving husband is not somehow finding and connecting with that special, wild, mysterious, hidden, hurt, angry man-child of your past . . . it is knowing and experiencing Christ's love for you that has loved you with an everlasting love that not only has rescued you from your sins penalty, but restores you so completely that you become a channel of that love toward your wife.

Four truths for husbands to embrace as both model and motivation . . .

1. Jesus Christ loves you sacrificially.                      *Gave himself up for her*                      5:25

This unselfish love is the standard and cause of all Christian love. This love does not seek its own satisfaction; it is not simply affection responding to affection. It is giving that strives for the highest good of the one loved. This is a radical and transformational love that places divinely intended value on the wife by the husband.

Two characteristics of this sacrificial love stand out for the husband . . .

- Sacrificial love is voluntary.
- Sacrificial love is costly.

Cmp. 5:1-2     'gave himself up' directs the husband's attention to the cross as both a model and motivation to willingly sacrifice his interests and resources for the welfare of his wife.

2. Jesus Christ loves you proactively.                      *That he might*                      5:26-27

There are three purpose clauses that describe why Christ gave himself up for the church. There were goals, objectives and specific needs that were addressed. The greatest need of people and the greatest pleasure of God were addressed proactively in Christ's giving of himself on the cross in love.

Note the intentionality of Christ's love to saved people . . .

That he might sanctify her     26

That he might present her to himself     27

That he might make her holy and blameless     27

This kind of proactive love for your wife is reflected by you . . .

- Taking the initiative to solve problems.
- Taking the initiative to maximize your wife's potential.

Cmp. Col. 1:22, 28

Eph. 1:4

3. Jesus Christ loves you attentively.

*As their own bodies*

5:28-29

The assumption of this truth statement is the same as that made by the Old Testament law and Jesus himself when they taught that a person should love their neighbor as themselves. It is a safe assumption that a person will look after their own interests and welfare. Husbands are to love their wives as attentively as they care about themselves.

The appeal to love as yourself is supported by the truth that Christ cares attentively for members of his body. It is true that Christ loves his own body, spiritually speaking. He attentively cares for his body. Husbands attentively care for their bodies. This attentive care by Christ is both a model and motivation for the husband in loving his wife.

Two terms describe the attentiveness of the husbands love for his wife . . .

Nourish

Eph. 6:4

leadership in spiritual development

Cherish

1Thess. 2:7

Cmp. Col. 3:19 (do not be harsh)

1Peter 3:7 (understanding way)

4. Jesus Christ loves you completely.

*Members of his body/two become one flesh* 30-32

The truth thread that runs through these 3 verses is that of union with God. The mystery is the revealing of something that was hidden. In your union with Christ as a member of his body as well as your union with your wife as one flesh in marriage, a profound truth has been revealed more clearly.

Union with God and with people is only possible through sacrificial love and submission. A husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church is continually unveiling the good news of how the separation caused by sin is restored through sacrificial love and submission of Christ. This speaks to the commitment of the husband to love his wife.

Husbands love for wife is modeled after and motivated by the complete love of Christ . . .

Christ will never abandon his church for another lover.  
Christ never uses the church for his own ego or needs.

Cmp. Romans 8:31-39

E.3:14-19

### **Four necessary 'wow' moments for loving husbands:**

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|--|---|---------|
| 1. Jesus Christ loves you sacrificially. | <i>Gave himself up for her</i>                  | 5:25    |
| 2. Jesus Christ loves you proactively.   | <i>That he might</i>                            | 5:26-27 |
| 3. Jesus Christ loves you attentively.   | <i>As their own bodies</i>                      | 5:28-29 |
| 4. Jesus Christ loves you completely.    | <i>Members of his body/two become one flesh</i> | 30-32   |

### **Take Aways**

1. Men, run to Christ. You may have a wife that will help you connect to him, you may not. Acknowledge in a fresh way your selfishness, your need of cleansing, your bitterness, your lack of hope in God. Commit your soul's well being to your faithful Creator.

2. Men, build your heart for God and the gospel. Stop listening to all the voices supporting your selfishness and excusing or ignoring your cold heart toward God. Identify and root out the idols of your heart that have replaced a warm and joyful affection for Christ.

3. Men, accept your God given mission. Determine to let God use you to unravel the mystery of the good news to those around you who do not know Gods transforming power. That may be your wife or the potential husbands and wives you call your children and grandchildren. Determine to make your servant leadership consistent with the person God uses to attract entire families to himself.