

Place Lurgan Baptist 24:3:2009

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

Reading: Ephesians 5:15-33

2. HUSBANDS

Four year old Suzie had just been told the story of “*Snow White*,” for the first time in her life. She could hardly wait to get home from nursery school to tell her mommy. With wide eyed excitement she retold the fairy tale to her mother that afternoon. After relating how Prince Charming had arrived on his beautiful white horse and kissed Snow White back to life. Suzie asked loudly, “*And do you know what happened then ?*” “*Yes,*” said her mom, “*they lived happily ever after.*” “*No,*” responded Suzie, with a frown “*they got married.*” In child like innocence that little four year old girl spoke the real truth without realizing it. Getting married and living happily are necessarily synonymous. Check the statistics if you are not convinced. Unhappy marriages, domestic conflicts and spiraling divorce rates are common among us, all because people have abandoned God’s original blueprint for marriage and the home. *Can you imagine the confusion that would occur on a football team where no one knew his specific responsibility ?* Can you imagine the frustration that would exist in a business where there were no job descriptions, where everything was everybody’s business, where everyone was a “*chief*,” and no one was an “*Indian*.”

Well that is the kind of frustration and confusion that exists in many marriages because there has never been a sorting out of the responsibilities. Everyone is a “*chief*,” and no one is an “*Indian*.” Hence, oneness in marriage is not experienced. Last time we looked at “*God’s original blueprint for Marriage.*” Tonight we want to ask and seek to answer the question, “*What is the husbands God given role ?*” Now there are many passages in the Scriptures which speak of man’s part in marriage. Some of the key passages are (Eph 5:23-33, 1 Tim 3:4-5, 1 Peter 3:7 1 Cor 7:3-4 and Col 3:19) Now as you read and study these relevant Scriptures you’ll see that God is clearly saying that that husband has two primary responsibilities to his wife.

(1) THE CHRISTIAN HUSBAND IS TO LEAD HIS WIFE

Look if you will at (Eph 5:23) Now headship means leadership. The word “*head*,” (*kephale*) is used in the figurative sense of “*one in authority over*,” or “*leader*.” When the Scripture says, “*the husband is head of the wife*,” it means he is the leader of the two people, the authority figure. Tragically, some Christian men think that headship means dictatorship or lordship, being the boss. Thus the Christian doctrine of Christian headship has been misused to justify the physical and mental abuse of women, keeping “*women in their place*,” demeaning and controlling women, working wives to death or neglecting them. But Christian husbands who abuse or neglect their wives don’t understand genuine Christian marriage. They don’t understand loving servant leadership. Dr. Al Martin

says, “ *Husbands are called to love their wives from a position of assumed headship. When a man seems to love his wife from any other than from a position of headship loves degenerates into sentimentalism. But if takes his headship in any other context than that of love it degenerates into cruel tyranny.*” You see, on every hand there are husbands who fit into one of two unbiblical categories. On the one hand there are men who are nothing but the little lackeys of every frown and whim of their domineering wives. “ *Yes dear, certainly dear,*” They are always backing down. Why ? Because they don’t to upset their wives who want to dominate them. On the other hand there are men who say, “ *I am the head of this home, and they use these verses like a club over their wives but their headship is as far removed from Christ and His church as heaven is from hell.*” Paul says, “ *the husband is the head of the wife.*” He is the leader. Now think of,

(a) THE MEANING OF LEADERSHIP:

Headship means leadership. It does not mean merely authority to exercise, wearing the uniform, and having the right to give the final word. It means all of these things, but it means also assuming responsibilities that go with such authority. What is the Bible’s concept of a leader ? Look if you will at (Matt 20:20-28) Now according to this passage, what is a leader ? ***A leader is first and foremost a servant.*** His concern is not for himself, his concern is not to give orders, to have his own way. His concern is to meet the needs of others. Indeed, if the best interests of others are not on his heart, if he is not willing

to sacrifice himself, his time, money, desires, needs, if the needs of others are not more important than his own, he is not qualified to lead. (Matt 20:28) Do you recall what happened in the Upper Room when the Lord Jesus laid aside his garments, took a basin, water and a towel and began to wash the disciple’s feet ? *You see, the insignia of leadership is not a throne or a club but a big towel and a basin.* In other words, a leader must have a servant’s heart. Now when we apply this Biblical concept of leadership to the husband we discover that the husband is to be his wife’s servant leader. Inasmuch as Christ is head over all things for the sake of His church (1:22-23) That is, whatever Christ does He does for the sake of, He does with our best interests at heart. In just the same way, the husband is to live for the sake of his wife always keeping her best interests at heart. He is to be his wife’s servant leader. Now having discovered that Biblical leadership requires a servant’s heart, look at,

(b) THE MODEL IN LEADERSHIP:

Who is to be our example in leadership ? Christ. “ For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mk 10:45) Now think of some of the ways in which Christ, the great leadership model, led His disciples.

1. Christ had Continual Association with them:

The Lord did not lead His disciples by long distance telephone calls, or by writing them a few letters, or by infrequent visits. For over three years the Lord Jesus spent

great amounts of time with them. Look at Mark's gospel for a moment. (1:17, 3:14, 4:10) Those are significant words in (3:14) “ *And He ordained twelve that they should be with Him.* ” In other words, Christ called them that they might learn from Him, spent time with Him, become more like Him. These twelve were trained, for the Master brought many influences to bear upon them to mould them into the men He wanted them to be. They lived in His presence for three continuous years of concentrated schooling. They heard His matchless words, they saw His startling miracles, and they observed His unerring conduct. The Lord Jesus had continual association with them. Do you recall what Peter says to Christian husbands ? He says, “ *Likewise, ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel.* ” (1 Pet 3:1) Peter is saying “ *husbands be considerate as you live with your wives.* ”

Perhaps you're saying “ *I do. I come every night. We have the same address, eat at the same table, sleep in the same bed, and even use the same bathroom.* ” But that's not all this verse is talking about. The original term translated “ *dwell,* ” means “ *to dwell down,* ” and it suggests being closely aligned, being completely at home with. The little word “ *with,* ” is a term calling for close companionship, deep down togetherness. You see, no husband is fulfilling his God given responsibility that does not delight in and arrange for frequent and regular companionship with her. Now do husbands need to hear this ? Yes, for it's so easy to be immersed in work, business, even service for the Lord to the detriment of your own wife. Christian pastors,

preachers, elders, workers, who get too busy solving other people's problems may end up creating problems of their own. One survey revealed that the average husband and wife had thirty seven minutes a week together of actual communication. *Is it any wonder that marriages fall apart after the children grow up and leave home ?* The husband and wife are alone to live with actual strangers. I heard about a farmer and his wife in bed one night and a tornado came and lifted the roof off the house. As they flying through the air the wife began to cry. The husband said, “ *this is certainly no time to cry.* ” She said, “ *I can't help it. This is the first time we have been out together in twenty years.* ” My there is so much designed in these days to keep you and your spouse apart. Leisure activities, further education, even the church program can keep husbands and wives apart. Husbands, can I ask you, do you spend as much time with your wives now as you did when you were courting them ? 1.

2. Christ gave Relevant Instruction to them:

In many places the Scriptures asserts that the Lord Jesus taught His disciples.

Matthew tells us “ *And seeing the multitudes He went up into a mountain, and when He was set His disciples came unto Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them saying,* ” (5:1)

Mark tells us “ *And when He was alone they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. And He said unto them,* ” (4:10)

John tells us that the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “ *A new commandment I give unto you*,” (13:34)

You see, sometimes the Lord Jesus taught His disciples formally, the Sermon on the Mount, the Upper Room Ministry. On other occasions the Saviour taught them informally. In the midst of real life situations, when He was faced by a crisis or confrontation or when He was asked a question. (Matt 19:3-12 16-27 21:12-32) But whether He taught them formally or informally, Christ led and served His disciples by teaching them. Is the same not expected of the Christian husband ? (1 Cor 14:34-35) Here the role of the husband as the wife’s teacher is clearly established. ***Husbands, have you been a true prophet to your wife ?*** Has she come to know the Saviour and the Scriptures better because of you ?

Do you want to have your heart searched ? Then go home tonight and ask your wife. “ *Have I been a true prophet to you ? Do you know the Lord better because of me ?*” My we are so good at providing for the physical welfare of our wives and children, but when it comes to their spiritual welfare many of us are failures. As a husband do you pray with your wife and children ? As a husband do you do your utmost to ensure they are present at the services of the fellowship ? How it must grieve the Lord when Christian wives are the sole impetus in the family for spiritual things. When she finds it necessary to say to her husband, “ *Let’s get the whole family out tonight.*” What are we husbands doing ? 1, 2,

3. Christ was a Living Example before them:

For often as we read the gospels we hear the Lord saying, “ *Follow me,*” “ *Come ye after me,*” (Mk 1:17) or “ *For I have given you an example.*” (Jn 13:15) Christ did not simply tell men that they ought always to pray. He lived a life of constant prayer. He did not merely tell men to believe in the sovereignty of God. He lived a life that revealed confidence in and submission to the sovereignty of God. Christ’s life was an example of what He wanted His disciples to believe and how He wanted them to behave. ***Does Biblical leadership not involve being an example for those who are being led ?*** Surely as leaders in our home we husbands must strive to be an example, a pattern of godliness, compassion and devotion to God. Now none of us are sinlessly perfect, and no husband will ever be a perfect example to his wife, but is this not what we should strive for ? (Phil 3:12-14) Do you tell me that your wife is so critical, harsh, unchristlike, prayerless, I wonder is she merely following your example ? Finally,

4. Christ made Important Decisions for them:

And delegated responsibility to them. (Mk 1:35-39, 6:7 6:35-43) Is the great commission not a perfect example of this ? Where Christ gave clear, specific directions so that the disciples knew what was expected of them, and how they should go about their tasks. At the same time the Lord Jesus gave them room to use their own initiative. Now Christian husbands are called upon to lead their wives by making decisions and delegating responsibility. Paul speaks of an elder and deacon like this, “ *One that ruleth well his own house.*” (1 Tim 3:4, 12) That is, he must be one who manages his own household well. Now

of course a good manager is one who is in control, but does not do everything by himself. This is what a husband is to be. To be the leader does not mean that he must bear all the responsibility and do all the work, while his wife bears nothing and does nothing. But it does mean that he will see to it that the work gets done and that everyone know who does what. Husbands, God call you to be your wife's leader. How are you getting on ? How do you measure up to this standard ? Are you truly the head of your home ? Do you know what is going on from day to day ? Are you in control of what is happening ? Are you leading your wife and family in a godly direction ? (1)

(2) THE CHRISTIAN HUSBAND IS TO LOVE HIS WIFE

Some years ago a newspaper in the U.S.A. called "*The Saturday Evening Post*," carried an article entitled, "*The Seven Stages of the Married Cold*." It told of a husband's reactions to his wife's cold during their first seven years of marriage. It went something like this.

The First Year: "*Sugar, I am really worried about you. You have a bad sniffle, and there's no telling about these things. I am putting you in hospital this afternoon for a general check up and a good rest. I know the food is lousy but I'll be bringing your meals.*"

The Second Year: "*Listen dear, I do not like the sound of that cough and I have called Doc Millar to rush over here. Now you go to bed like a good girl.*"

The Third Year: "*Maybe you had better lie down honey, nothing like a good rest when you feel terrible. I will bring you something.*"

The Fourth Year: "*Now look dear, be sensible. After you have fed the kids and got the dishes done and cleaned the floor you had better lie down.*"

The Fifth Year: "*Why don't you take a couple of aspirin.*"

The Sixth Year: "*I wish you would gargle or something instead of sitting around all evening barking like a seal.*"

The Seventh Year: "*For goodness sake, stop sneezing. Are you trying to give me pneumonia ?*"

The decline of marriage, as seen through the common cold. A humorous look at a not so humorous reality. Now just as the word "*submit*," is the key word in the wife's relationship, the word "*love*," is the key word in the husband's relationship. Look at how many times this word appears in this passage. (5:25, 28, 33) Now there are several words for love in the Greek language.

- There is **Eros**:

We get our word erotic from that word. It's a word that has to do with the sensual or physical aspects of love.

- There is **Philos**:

We get our word Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love from that. When Christ got news that Lazarus was dead the Bible says in (Jn Ch 11) “ *Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.*” The word there is the word philos which means social love. It meant “ *Lord, the man you are fond of is sick.*” So there is eros, physical love. There is philos, social love. Then there is the highest form of love which is the word used in this passage which is the Greek word **agape**, which means love to the highest degree. Paul says, “ *Husbands love your wives*,” But you say, “ *What do you think I married her for.*” Well, what kind of love is Paul speaking of here ? Well, he is certainly not speaking about **infatuation**. Nor is he speaking about that stuff the rock singer’s croak about. “ *I can’t live without you baby.*” What that simply means is you stir up my hormones and I need myself satisfied with you. You are the means of satisfying my passions.” Now that has nothing to do with agape love. What is love ? A lot of people want to make love just simply a feeling. Love based simply on your feelings. Like the poet who said,

**Love is very funny thing
It’s shaped just like a lizard
It wraps its tail around your heart
And goes right through your gizzard**

Well, what is love ? “ *God is love.*” (1 Jn 4:16) Read (1 Corinthians Ch 13) and see what love is. What is love ? **Love is that selfless quality that seeks the good of its object even at personal cost.** The Bible says,

“ *Love seeketh not her own.*” (1 Cor 13:4) “ *Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.*” (5:25) “ *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*,” (Jn 3:16) Was God infatuated with a world of sinners ? No, everything in us disgusted Him and provoked His wrath, but He loved us. My He moved toward us in that selfless attitude that seeks our good even at personal cost. You see, the world says, “ *love is getting,*” but the Word says “ *love is giving.*” (Gal 2:20) So Paul calls upon Christian husbands to exercise towards their wives that selfless affection that seeks their good even at personal cost. Now notice how Paul enlarges on this.

(a) *He is to love her even as he loves Himself:*

Twice over in this passage the Lord exhorts the husband to love his wife even as he loves himself. (5:28, 33) Ladies, do men take care of themselves ? I mean are a man’s needs, desires, hopes, body, comfort, not very important to him ? He nourishes and cherish himself. He protects and provides for the needs of his body. When he is hungry he eats, when he is thirsty he drinks, when he is tired he sleeps, when he is in pain he goes to the Doctor. When he cuts himself he washes the wound and binds it up. A man very naturally and carefully and fervently nourishes and cherishes himself. “ *Well,*” says Paul “ *that’s the way a man is to love his wife.*” He is to nourish her, cherish her, protect her, satisfy her, provide for her, care for her, sacrifice for her to the same degree and in the same way he does for himself. Now, is that not

a lot of loving ? Is that not a high standard ? Well, there is even a higher standard than that.

(b) He is to love her even as Christ loved the Church:

Look if you will at (5:25) I mean who of us can fully understand the love that Christ had for the church ? Scriptures speaks of the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. (Eph 3:18-19) Samuel Francis wrote,

**Oh the deep, deep, love of Jesus
Vast, unmeasured, boundless free
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me**

Now don't miss what Paul is saying. He is saying that the husband is to love his wife with a love that is equal to, commensurate with, reflective of, the love wherewith Christ loved the church and continues to love it. Now let me name some of,

- *The CHARACTERISTICS of that LOVE:*

1. It is a REALISTIC Love:

“Husbands love your wives even as Christ,” (5:25) Now when Christ set His love upon the church what was its condition ? (Rom 5:8) When did God demonstrate His love toward us ? *“While we were yet sinners.”* In Ezekiel (Ch 16) we see the history of Israel from her conception to her glory under Solomon. She is pictured as baby who

has just been born and not been washed. Yet God loved this nation. God says, *“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love and I spread my skirt over thee and covered thy nakedness.”* (16:8) The poet puts it like this,

**He saw me ruined in the fall
Yet He loved me**

“Now,” says Paul *“love your wives realistically.”* Do not allow your love for them to be diminished because you discern faults, sins, weaknesses in them. That's why he tells us in (Col 3:19) *“Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them.”* Is it not so that we don't really know someone till we marry them ? Then we marry, get to know them intimately, discover faults and become bitter against them. But that's not how Christ deals with the church. He bears and forbears with us. Here are two bears that you need to keep in marriage. Bear and forbear. Husbands, do you love your wives realistically ? Young folk, young ladies when some young man comes along and says *“you are the most beautiful thing on earth.”* Say to them *“Hey, come on, before long you're going to discover that I am not perfect, but are you still going to love me because God says you are to love me even as Christ loved the church.”*

2. It is an EXCLUSIVE Love:

For Paul says, *“Christ also loved the church.”* (5:25) Now while there is a love which God has for all mankind

(Matt 5:45 Ps 145:9 Jn 3:16) Paul is speaking here about God's special love for His own. He loved the church. And there is but one woman to whom I am to exercise this Christ like love, my own legitimate wife. *Now do husbands need to hear this ?* Yes they do. For they are to regard this love for their wives as a sacred guardian to which no-one else intrudes. I need to know that I am pledged to that woman and to that woman alone and to that woman only will I show this kind of love.

3. It is a SACRIFICIAL Love:

For Paul says, “ *Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.* ” (5:25) It was His love that moved Him to give Himself. It is His love which moves Him to nourish and cherish the church. Why the very life of love is to spend itself for the sake of another. I heard about a young man who was professing his undying love to his girlfriend. He said, “ *Darling, I would swim through a river for you. I would climb a mountain for you. Darling, I would wade through a swamp for you and if it does not rain I will be over to see on Friday night.* ” Tell me, do you love your wife sacrificially ? I mean do you give up time, pleasure, cherished ambitions, friends for her ? When your wife has a problem and she's sending out those signals that she wants to talk with you, what do you do ? Do you forget the football game ? Do you lay aside the books and the business ? But you say, “ *I would have to give up.* ” Yes, you would. “ *Husbands love your wives and gave Himself for it.* ” (5:25) Young ladies when some young man starts saying, “ *I love you.* ” Ask him what he means by that. Ask him, “ *Are you ready to give*

up your circle of friends so that I can become your closest friend as well as your wife ? ”

4. It is a PURPOSEFUL Love:

Christ gave Himself for the church. *Why ?* Well, look at (5:26-27) You see, Christ's love has a distinct and well defined purpose, namely the perfection and presentation of the church to Himself as His bride. Think of it. What did the Saviour have in mind as He marched toward Golgotha ? *He sought a perfect bride.* You see, husbands are to love their wives purposefully. Our love is to have a definite purpose, namely the development of our wife's spiritual life, and the provision of her emotional, mental and physical needs, that your wife may be more and more to your delight, to her happiness and to God's glory. Husbands, do you ever ask yourselves periodically, “ *Am I under God the instrument to see my wife being made more and more like Christ ? Is she more like Christ because of me ?* ” “ Ah,” you say, “ *But I bring home the bread.* ” So could a trained chimpanzee. My Its does not take a man, let alone a Christian man to do that.

But for a man to come through the door at night and see his wife distraught and disturbed and say, “ *Dear let me help,* ” and pitch in there and encourage his wife, that's love that is concerned about her well being. Now how do you measure up to this standard ? I heard about a man one time and he went to his pastor and said, “ *I think I am guilty of idolatry.* ” The preacher said, “ *Why ?* ” “ *I think I love my wife too much.* ” The pastor said, “ *do you think you love her more than Christ loves the church ?* ” I am

sure no-one has ever loved his wife this way, but this is the goal to which every husband is to press. The Characteristics of that Love, but notice in closing,

- *The COMMUNICATION of that LOVE:*

How does Christ communicate His love to His church ? How therefore, can a husband communicate his love to his wife ? Wayne Mack in his book “ Strengthening your Marriage,” has some practical suggestions. You express your love to your wife,

- *By way of words:*

Most women crave verbal assurance of their husbands love. (S.S. 4:1 Jn 13:34) Ulster men are not good at this.

- *By providing for the satisfaction of her varying needs:*

Remember your wife has a variety of needs, physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and you should be concerned about meeting those needs.
(Jn 10:9 1 Tim 5:8)

- *By assisting her to fulfill her chores:*

Wives whose husbands will not lift a finger to do anything they consider “ *women’s work*,” often begin to think. He says, “ *He loves me, but he really does not, for if he did he would help me.*” (Prov 31:15 Phil 4:13)

- *By being open with her:*

For the more a husband opens up to his wife, the more she gets the message that he really cares for her. (Jn 15:19 1 Pet 3:7)

- *By giving her a lot of tenderness, respect and courtesy:*

Treat her as you would a valuable jewel rather than a piece of rubbish. (Col 3:9 Heb 4:15-16)

- *By showing to her that apart from your relationship to Jesus Christ she has first place in your life:*

Well, has she ? What means more to you as a husband ? Your wife or your children ? Your wife or your job ? Your wife or your sport ? Helping others or helping my wife ?

Well, there you have it. Two primary responsibilities for husbands. (1) (2) Can I ask you a pointed question in closing. If someone asked your children, “ *How much does Christ love the church ?*” Would they be able to reply, “ **Just watch my Daddy in his relationship to my Mummy, and you’ll get some idea of how much Christ loves the church.**”

