

God's People Part 2: How We Act In The Family (Husbands) Ephesians 5:25-33

Introduction: Today is week two in a 4-week section of our study of Ephesians on how we are to act as God's people in the family. Last week addressed wives; this week's addresses husbands; next week is about children; then we get into parenting.

As I stated last week, don't assume you shouldn't pay attention when one of those subjects doesn't directly impact you. Even if you are a single adult with no kids and no plans to ever get married, the subject still has MASSIVE societal implications and contains HUGE Gospel foundations, motivation, and purpose that apply to everybody, no matter where they are in life, including the church itself!

As I already stated, we began this section of Ephesians last week, where the text begins—Paul's instructions to wives. But, because a family is one body with different parts playing different roles, what we read last week is inseparably linked to what we are reading this week. So, let's take a quick second to re-read what we looked at last week:

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Notice that, in speaking to wives, Paul has already clearly established that the husband is the leader/the head of the marriage and has pointed out how he should love and lead his wife. The statement about husbands is massive. A husband is to love and lead his wife as CHRIST loves and leads the church! That's not just something you can say and then just move on. Therefore, to no surprise, Paul gets into this subject big time. He writes,

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 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. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:25-33)

Proposition: In Ephesians 5:25-33, Paul clarifies two clear overarching principles for the husband's leadership of his wife and home.

The first overarching principle is that,

(1) A husband should view and treat his wife as the one he LIVES to bless and honor. (5:25-27)

- A. “No one reading this passage in the twenty-first century can fully realize how great it is. Throughout the years, the Christian view of marriage has come to be widely accepted. It is still recognized by the majority as the ideal, even in these permissive days. Even where practice has fallen short of that ideal, it has always been in the minds and hearts of those who live in a Christian situation. Marriage is regarded as the perfect union of body, mind, and spirit between a man and a woman. But things were very different when Paul wrote. In this passage, Paul is setting down an ideal which shone with a radiant purity in an immoral world. Let us look briefly at the situation against which Paul wrote this passage. The Jews had a low view of women. In his morning prayer, there was a sentence in which a Jewish man gave thanks that God had not made him ‘a Gentile, a slave or a woman’. In Jewish law, a woman was not a person but a thing. She had no legal rights whatsoever; she was absolutely her husband’s possession to do with as he willed. In theory, the Jews had the highest ideal of marriage. The Rabbis had their sayings. ‘Every Jew must surrender his life rather than commit idolatry, murder or adultery.’ ‘The very altar sheds tears when a man divorces the wife of his youth.’ But the fact was that, by Paul’s day, divorce had become tragically easy. The law of divorce is summarized in Deuteronomy 24:1. ‘Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house.’ Obviously, everything turns on the interpretation of *something objectionable*. The stricter Rabbis, headed by the famous Shammai, held that the phrase meant adultery and only adultery, and declared that even if a wife was as mischievous as Queen Jezebel, a husband might not divorce her except for adultery. The more liberal Rabbis, headed by the equally famous Hillel, interpreted the phrase in the widest possible way. They said that it meant that a man might divorce his wife if she spoiled his dinner by putting too much salt in his food, if she walked in public with her head uncovered, if she talked with men in the streets, if she spoke disrespectfully of her husband’s parents in her husband’s hearing, if she was an argumentative woman, if she was troublesome or quarrelsome. A certain Rabbi Akiba interpreted the phrase *but she does not please him* to mean that a husband might divorce his wife if he found a woman whom he considered more attractive. It is easy to see which school of thought would predominate. Two facts in Jewish law made the matter worse. First, the wife had no rights of divorce at all, unless her husband became a leper or rejected the faith or engaged in a disgusting trade such as that of a tanner. Broadly speaking, a husband, under Jewish law, could divorce his wife on any grounds, whereas there were no grounds on which a wife could divorce her husband. Second, the process of divorce was disastrously easy. The Mosaic law said that a man who wanted a divorce had to hand his wife a bill of divorce which said: ‘Let this be from me your writ of divorce and letter of dismissal and deed of liberation, that you may

marry whatsoever man you will.' All a man had to do was to hand that bill of divorce, correctly written out by a Rabbi, to his wife in the presence of two witnesses and the divorce was complete. The only other condition was that the woman's dowry must be returned. At the time of Christ's coming, the marriage bond was in grave danger even among the Jews, since Jewish girls were refusing to marry because their position as a wife was so uncertain."¹

- B. The teachings of Jesus on marriage, which are what the Apostles reiterated in their writings, drew a stark contrast with the way men viewed women, and consequently their wives, not only in the Jewish culture of Paul's day, but also still in many cultures today, especially Islamic culture. Throughout human history, men have viewed women as instruments to serve them, but the Gospel calls men to see women, and especially their wives, the way God sees them, and, in so doing, God expects husbands to view and treat their wives as Christ views and treats the church!
- C. Commenting on what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:25-33, **Martin Lloyd-Jones** wrote,
- D. **"Here, in this essentially practical part of this Epistle, he suddenly throws out the most exalted and wonderful statement he has ever made anywhere about the nature of the Christian church and her relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. You observe that in treating this matter of husbands, and how they are to behave towards their wives, he also treats that other subject, and he gives both this wonderful treatment."**²
- E. Paul writes,
- F. **25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 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.**
- G. To understand this passage, we have to understand what Paul is saying about Christ's love and actions for the church. The following are the thoughts of some great commentaries on Ephesians:
 - 1. "It will be observed that Paul uses five verbs to indicate the unfolding stages of Christ's commitment to his bride, the church. He *loved* her, *gave himself up* for her, to *sanctify* her, having *cleansed* her, that he might *present* her to himself. The statement is so complete and comprehensive that some

¹ Barclay, W. (2002). [*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (pp. 194–195). Westminster John Knox Press.

² Lloyd-Jones, D. M. (1974). [*Life in the Spirit in Marriage, Home and Work: An Exposition of Ephesians 5:18–6:9*](#) (p. 130). The Banner of Truth Trust.

scholars think it may be a quotation from an early Christian confession, liturgy or hymn. It seems to trace Christ's care for his church from a past to a future eternity. Certainly the words *Christ loved the church*, preceding as they do his self-sacrifice on her behalf, seem to look back to his eternal pre-existence in which he set his love on his people and determined to come to save them. So, having loved the church, he *gave himself up for her*. The reference is, of course, primarily to the cross."³

2. "But why did Jesus Christ do it? What was the purpose of his sacrifice? It was *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her*. Perhaps there is a deliberate allusion to the bridal bath which took place before both Jewish and Greek weddings. The tenses of the verbs suggest that the cleansing of the church precedes her consecration or sanctification. Indeed, the cleansing seems to refer to the initial purification or cleansing from sin and guilt which we receive when we first repent and believe in Jesus. It is accomplished *by the washing of water with the word*, or more simply 'by water and word' (NEB)."⁴

Note: The work of regeneration of the Spirit through the hearing of the Gospel that brings the soul to faith and life in God.

3. "The 'sanctification' appears to refer to the present process of making her holy in character and conduct by the power of the indwelling Spirit, while the 'presentation' is eschatological, and will take place when Christ returns to take her to himself. He will present her to himself *in splendour (endoxon)*. The word may hint at the bride's beautiful wedding dress, since it is used of clothing. But it means more than this. 'Glory' (*doxa*) is the radiance of God, the shining forth and manifestation of his otherwise hidden being. So too the church's true nature will become apparent. On earth she is often in rags and tatters, stained and ugly, despised and persecuted. But one day she will be seen for what she is, nothing less than the bride of Christ, 'free from spots, wrinkles or any other disfigurement' (JBP), *holy and without blemish*, beautiful and glorious. It is to this constructive end that Christ has been working and is continuing to work. The bride does not make herself presentable; it is the bridegroom who labours to beautify her in order to present her to himself. His love and self-sacrifice for her, his cleansing and sanctifying of her, are all designed for her liberation and her perfection, when at last he presents her to himself in her full glory."⁵
4. "Vs. 26, 27. As the apostle unites with his design of teaching the duties arising from the conjugal relation, the purpose to illustrate the nature of the union between Christ and his church, these verses relate to the latter point and not to the former. They set forth the design of Christ's death. Its remote

³ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (p. 227). InterVarsity Press.

⁴ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (p. 227). InterVarsity Press.

⁵ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (pp. 228–229). InterVarsity Press.

design was to gain the church for himself as an object of delight. Its proximate design was to prepare it for that high destiny. These ideas are presented figuratively. The church is regarded as the bride of Christ. This is designed to teach—1. That it is an object of a peculiar and exclusive love. As the love which a bridegroom has for his bride is such as he has for no one else; so the love which Christ has for his church is such as he has for no other order of creatures in the universe, however exalted. ... It sustains a relation to him which it sustains to no other being, and in which no other being participates. ... more intimate than any which subsists between him and any other order of creatures. We are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones. ... Such being the high destiny of the church, the proximate end of Christ's death was to purify, adorn, and render it glorious, that it might be prepared to sit with him on his throne. She is to be as a bride adorned for her husband. These are not imaginations, nor exaggerations, nor empty figures; but simple, scriptural, sanctifying, and saving truths. And what is true of the church collectively, is true of its members severally. Each is the object of Christ's peculiar love. Each sustains to him this peculiar, exclusive, and intimate relation. Each is the object in which he thus delights, and each is to be made perfectly holy, without spot, and glorious.”⁶

5. “5:26. This “washing” probably alludes figuratively to the bride’s prenuptial washing (of course, washing was natural before any occasion on which one wished to impress another positively). After this washing the bride was perfumed, anointed and arrayed in wedding clothes. The betrothal ceremony in Judaism also came to be called “the sanctification of the bride,” setting her apart for her husband. The “word” naturally refers to the saving gospel of Christ (1:13).”⁷
6. “This is a self-sacrificial love, a love that impels the one loving to give himself in self-sacrifice for the well-being of the one who is loved. The husband has three other kinds of love for his wife, a love of passion (*erōs* (ἐρως)), a love of complacency and satisfaction (*stergō* (στεργω)), and a fondness or affection (*phileō* (φιλεω)). All these are saturated with the *agapaō* (ἀγαπαω) love of the Spirit-filled husband, purified and made heavenly in character. Expositors comments on the words, “that He might sanctify and cleanse it,” as follows: “Statement of the great object with which Christ in His love for the Church gave Himself up to death for it. An object worthy of the self-sacrifice, described in definite terms and with a solemn significance—the sanctification and cleansing of the Church with a view to its final presentation in perfect holiness at the great day.” “Sanctify” is *hagiazō* (ἁγιάζω), “to set apart for a sacred use.” The distinctive aspect of sanctification here is that of inward ethical purification as in I Thessalonians 5:23. ... This cleansing is accomplished by “the washing of water by the

⁶ Hodge, C. (1858). [A commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians](#) (pp. 316–317). Robert Carter and Brothers.

⁷ Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Eph 5:26). InterVarsity Press.

word.” “Washing” is *loutron* (λουτρον), “a bath.” The words “of water” are genitive of description, describing the bath as one effected by water. “By the word” is *en hrēmati* (ἐν ῥηματι), “in the sphere of the Word.” That is, this inward ethical purification is accomplished by the Word of God having liberty in the heart of the Spirit-filled believer, displacing sin and substituting in its place, righteousness. The blood of Christ cleanses from actual sin, and thus cleanses the believer. The Word cleanses him in the sense above mentioned, water being a type of the Word of God. ... “not having spot or wrinkle,” are an explanation on the negative side of what is meant in the word “glorious.” The bride is to be without moral blemish. “Holy” is *hagia* (ἁγία), “separate from evil”; “without blemish,” *amōmos* (ἄμωμος), “faultless, unblamable,” namely, free from faultiness, as a sacrificial animal without blemish.”⁸

7. “It must be a *sacrificial* love. He must love her as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for the Church. It must never be a selfish love. Christ loved the Church, not that the Church might do things for him, but that he might do things for the Church. The fourth-century Church father John Chrysostom has a wonderful expansion of this passage: ‘Hast thou seen the measure of obedience? Hear also the measure of love. Wouldst thou that thy wife shouldst obey thee as the Church doth Christ? Have care thyself for her as Christ for the Church. And if it be needful that thou shouldst give thy life for her, or be cut to pieces a thousand times, or endure anything whatever, refuse it not ... He brought the Church to his feet by his great care, not by threats nor fear nor any such thing; so do thou conduct thyself towards thy wife.’”⁹
8. “Just so a husband should never use his headship to crush or stifle his wife, or frustrate her from being herself. His love for her will lead him to an exactly opposite path. He will give himself for her, in order that she may develop her full potential under God and so become more completely herself.”¹⁰

H. The following are scriptures that bring out even more of what Paul is speaking of in this passage:

1. **11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)**

⁸ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 131–133). Eerdmans.

⁹ Barclay, W. (2002). [*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (p. 200). Westminster John Knox Press.

¹⁰ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (p. 229). InterVarsity Press.

2. **3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:3-14)**

3. **21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, (Colossians 1:21-22)**

- I. Now, the idea in all this is not that a woman is a messed-up, helpless, totally depraved sinner who is incapable of living in a marital relationship with a man unless the man swoops in like Jesus and transforms her life. This is also not to say that a woman needs a man to make her worthy of being in a relationship with him. If a man has any ounce of self-awareness and basic wisdom, he will see that it is indeed mind-blowing that any woman would commit to living in submission to him as her husband! The fact is that men and women alike are in need of Jesus and His salvation at the same level, and at no point can any man other than Jesus do for sinners what Jesus alone does.

- J. Therefore, the point is that, as the head of the Church, Christ uses His power not to punish us for our lack of love and obedience. Christ doesn't stand over us issuing edicts and punishments for failure, but rather to sacrifice everything to save us and rescue us! And listen, in His death, as eternally massive as it is, He didn't then say, "Ok, now that I've done this huge, amazing thing for you, I'm going to sit by the pool and watch you serve me for the rest of eternity."

- K. No, Christ not only paid the penalty of our sin on the cross, but He continues to pursue us and rescue us even when we fail Him! Even in our sinful rebellion, He continues with an unrelenting love to do all that is needed to rescue us from the

presence of sin in our lives and into the abundance of HIS LIFE. He doesn't get offended by our lack of love for Him; rather, He keeps loving and pursuing us so that we can experience the abundance of God's life, even when we run away and rebel! In other words, Christ exercises His headship for our blessing, even when our submission is wanting or even absent. His view towards us is not from His position of power and authority that truly deserves our total praise and submission, but one of love that, at the core of who God is, sincerely desires to rescue and redeem us from that which is destroying us; to save us from what separates us from living in an abiding relationship with Him, so that we can eternally live in perfect fellowship with one another! He doesn't punish us for the things in our lives that separate us. He died to rescue us from those things, and then every second of our life on this earth patiently pursues us and works through all things to lead us out of them. To the nth degree, He doesn't see us for what we don't do for Him, but in what He needs to do for us!

- L. I normally wait until the end to give a challenge, but I want to stop here and make sure we don't miss the very real and practical challenge the text presents us at this point.
- M. **Husbands, each day we need to ask ourselves whether our attitude and actions tell our WIFE that we see our authority as a position to give honor or to be honored; to give life or to be given life; to love or to be loved; to bless or to be blessed?** Furthermore, as we examine our attitudes and actions, we must do so with the full knowledge that they are entirely determined by what or whom we are trying to fill our lives with (5:17-21). If it's Jesus, then we honor, give, love, and bless from a sincere heart to do so; if it isn't Jesus, then we will be grabbing at our wife, job, money, hobbies, or even alcohol to do for us and in us what ironically they can never do.

The second overarching principle is that,

(2) A husband should view and treat his wife not separately from himself but AS himself. (5:28-33)

- A. Barclay noted that in Greek culture, men lacked any desire to experience oneness with their wives. In their culture, marriage was nothing more than a business arrangement for raising children. - "The situation was worse in the Greek world. Prostitution was an essential part of Greek life. The Athenian orator and statesman Demosthenes had laid it down as the accepted rule of life: 'We have courtesans for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs.' The women of the respectable classes in Greece led completely secluded lives. They took no part in public life; they never appeared on the streets alone; they never even appeared at meals or at social occasions; they had their own apartments where none but their husbands might enter. It was the aim that, as the historian Xenophon had it,

they ‘might see as little as possible, hear as little as possible and ask as little as possible’. The respectable woman of Greek society was brought up in such a way that companionship and fellowship in marriage was impossible. Socrates said: ‘Is there anyone to whom you entrust more serious matters than to your wife—and is there anyone to whom you talk less?’ Verus was the imperial colleague of the great emperor Marcus Aurelius. He was blamed by his wife for associating with other women, and his answer was that she must remember that the name of wife was a title of dignity but not of pleasure. The Greeks expected their wives to run the home and to care for their legitimate children; but they found their pleasure and their companionship elsewhere. To make matters worse, there was no legal procedure of divorce in Greece. As someone has put it, divorce was by nothing else than caprice, the result of a whim. The one security that a wife had was that her dowry must be returned. Home and family life were near to being extinct, and faithfulness was completely non-existent.”¹¹

- B. Once again, the Gospel couldn’t create a more obvious contrast with the culture than what it does with marriage and family! In the previous part of the passage, Paul confronted the Jewish view that saw women as second-tier humans and thus viewed a wife essentially as a slave. He now confronts the Greek view that often viewed a wife as nothing more than a business partner. Paul writes,
- C. **28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:28-33)**
- D. Elsewhere in the New Testament, we read,
 - 1. **29 Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31)**

Note: This clearly isn’t a command to some kind of narcissistic, manipulative love of your neighbor, but rather to see and treat your neighbor as you see and treat yourself. If I’m supposed to see my neighbor that way, how much more should I, as a husband, treat my wife that way!

¹¹ Barclay, W. (2002). [*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (pp. 196–197). Westminster John Knox Press.

2. **22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:22-23)**

Note: Jesus saw the church as one with Him and the Father. The church isn't a side show, or something to clock in and clock out of, but literally himself!

3. **4 And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:4-5)**

Note: When Saul was on a rampage, persecuting the church, Jesus didn't confront him and say, "Why are you persecuting my church?" but rather, "Why are you persecuting me?" Jesus saw the church as his own body, and thus anything negative done to the church was done to him!

4. **27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)**

- E. Your wife is not your employee, she's not a business partner, she's you, and you are her! You are ONE with her, so much so that in every way you view yourself, you should view her. Practically, that means I have to operate from the perspective of how my attitude, actions, or decisions affect, not me, but us. HOWEVER, the only way I can properly conclude how they affect us is if I correctly understand their impact on me as an individual and on my wife.
- F. Now, Paul is certainly first and foremost reminding men that as the head of the marriage and family, they must understand everything through the oneness they have with their wife and family. But, as we stated last week, oneness isn't just a perspective for a husband to have; it's the reality of what the family is. Husbands tend to be more vulnerable at seeing themselves separately from the family, but just because Paul is making sure to remind husbands that the head is never of itself a separate entity from the body, but rather always a part of the whole of the body, doesn't mean that a wife isn't! In marriage, a man and a woman are one body!
- G. **Given that marriage is oneness with your spouse, every attitude, action, word, and decision should be understood, measured, and made based on a correct understanding of the impact it has on you AND on your spouse. You can never view what you are doing in life as what you are doing in life. You're both doing it! You're both carrying the weight. You are one body!**
1. If it's not good for you, then it's not good for your spouse.

2. We need to be honest about how much of our effort in life is devoted to blessing our spouse and how much is devoted to blessing ourselves. How much of what we are doing is being done with little to no consideration or concern for how much it impacts our spouse?
3. We need to be honest about the efforts in our life where we try to add on some kind of “blessing” for our spouse and/or kids to try and cover up what it’s really about. We’ve all done it. Even though it’s really entirely for our own fulfillment, we try to figure out a way to make our spouse think it’s really about them. We will even find ways to try to convince ourselves that it’s really for our spouse. That’s not to say doing something for yourself is a bad thing, but if I do it with no consideration of how it impacts my spouse, then I’m living in denial that I’m one body with my spouse.
4. If my hands are dry and they apply lotion so they don’t feel dry anymore, it generally doesn’t affect my pancreas. But if my hand reaches for a lotion that causes pancreatic cancer, I not only damage my pancreas, but ultimately, my hands kill the body that my hand and pancreas are a part of, and thus, my hands and pancreas both die.
5. Everything that I am and do impacts everything my spouse is and does. If I don’t understand that, I’m likely going to not only negatively impact my spouse, but ironically, in my selfishness, I will impact myself as well, because we are one!

H. The following is some very helpful commentary from various scholars:

1. “It must be a *caring* love. A man must love his wife as he loves his own body. Real love loves not to extract service, nor to ensure that its own physical comfort is attended to; it cherishes the one it loves. There is something very wrong when a man regards his wife, consciously or unconsciously, as simply the one who cooks his meals and washes his clothes and cleans his house and brings up his children.”¹²
2. “If the word which characterizes the wife’s duty is ‘submit’, the word characterizing the husband’s is ‘love’. We might think that nature itself would teach husbands this priority obligation, but many cultures, both ancient and modern, prove the contrary. Of course, a certain tie of affection and desire binds every married couple together, and Paul’s Stoic contemporaries taught husbands to ‘love’. But the verb they used was the weak word *phileō*; it was Christian teaching which introduced strong, sacrificial ‘*agapē*-love’ into marriage.”¹³

¹² Barclay, W. (2002). [*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (p. 201). Westminster John Knox Press.

¹³ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God’s new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (p. 226). InterVarsity Press.

3. "It is an *unbreakable* love. For the sake of this love, a man leaves father and mother and is joined to his wife. They become one flesh. He is as united to her as the members of the body are united to each other, and would no more think of separating from her than of tearing his own body apart. Here indeed was an ideal in an age when men and women changed partners with as little thought as they changed clothes."¹⁴
4. "The whole relationship is *in the Lord*. In the Christian home, Jesus is an always-remembered, though an unseen, guest. In Christian marriage, there are not two partners, but three—and the third is Christ."¹⁵
5. "Expositors' comment on verse 28 is as follows: "The idea, therefore, is that even as Christ loved the Church, so too ought husbands to love their wives,—as *their own bodies*. This is not to be reduced to 'like themselves': nor does *hōs* (ὡς) (as) here mean simply 'like,' as if all that is meant is that the husband's love for his wife is to be *similar* to his love for his own body. The *hōs* (ὡς) (as) has its qualitative force, 'as it were,' 'as being.' *Christ* and *husband* are each *head*, as Paul has already put it, and as the Church is the body in relation to the former, so is the wife in relation to the latter. The husband, the head, therefore, is to love the wife as being his body, even as Christ loved the Church as forming His body. The idea of husband and wife as being *one flesh* is probably also in view. *He that loveth his own wife loveth himself*. The relation of *head* and *body* means that the wife is part of the husband's *self*. To love his wife, therefore, in this character as being his body, is to love himself. It is a love consequently, not merely of *duty*,—but of *nature*." The same authority continues on verse 29. "The 'for' gives a reason for the preceding statement, looking to the *thought*, however, rather than to the *form* of the statement. The *thought* is the oneness of husband and wife, the position of the wife as part of the husband's self; and the connection is this; 'he should love her even as Christ loved the Church, for the wife, I say, is as the body in that natural relationship in which the husband is the head, so that in loving her he loves himself; and this is the reason in *nature* why he should love her, for according to this, to hate his wife is to hate his own flesh, which is contrary to nature and a thing never seen.' 'Flesh' here has its non-ethical sense, practically, *body*." In verse 30, the Greek order is, "Because members we are of His body." The word "members" has the emphatic position. Expositors says: "We are not something apart from Christ, nor do we occupy only an incidental relation to Him. We are veritable parts of that body of which He is Head, and this is the reason why He nourishes and cherishes the Church."¹⁶

¹⁴ Barclay, W. (2002). [*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (p. 201). Westminster John Knox Press.

¹⁵ Barclay, W. (2002). [*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (p. 201). Westminster John Knox Press.

¹⁶ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 133–134). Eerdmans.

6. "But we all know from everyday experience how we love ourselves. Hence the practical usefulness of the 'golden rule' Jesus enunciated that we should treat others as we would ourselves like to be treated. For we all know this instinctively. It is after all the way we treat ourselves. *For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it* (verse 29a). That is, he feeds it and (it may mean) clothes it, or at any rate looks after it."¹⁷

7. "This exhortation to a husband to 'nourish and cherish' his wife as he does his own body is more than a useful guide to daily behaviour, however. It also contains an inner appropriateness, since he and his wife have in fact become 'one flesh'. Yet God intends sexual intercourse not only to be a union of bodies, but to symbolize and express a union of personalities. It is when husband and wife become thus deeply one with each other that truly *he who loves his wife loves himself*. ... This leads Paul to quote Genesis 2:24: *For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh* (verse 31) and to declare that *this mystery is a profound one* (verse 32). There seems no reason to doubt that in the first instance he is referring to the mysterious and sacred depths of sexual union itself. But then he immediately goes on to its yet deeper symbolism: *I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church*. In doing so, he not only uses the *egō* of his apostolic authority but actually employs the very expression *egō de legō* ('but I say') which Jesus himself used in the six antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount. It is appropriate for him to do so because a 'mystery' is a revealed truth, and the profound 'mystery' here, namely the church's union with Christ, is closely akin to that of Jewish-Gentile unity in the body of Christ, which had been revealed to him and of which he has written in 3:1–6. He thus sees the marriage relationship as a beautiful model of the church's union in and with Christ. When applied to Christ and his church, the 'one flesh' is identical with the 'one new man' of 2:15. Indeed, the three pictures of the church which Paul develops in Ephesians—the body, the building and the bride—all emphasize the reality of its unity on account of its union with Christ."¹⁸

8. "Verse 33 is a succinct summary of the fuller teaching which Paul has been giving to husbands and wives: *Let each one of you love his wife as himself*, for she and he have become one, *and let the wife see that she respects her husband*. It is true that 'respects' translates *phobētai*, meaning literally 'fears', but this verb 'may express the emotion of fear in all its modifications and in all its degrees from simple respect through reverence up to adoration, according to its object'. The apostle began with one couplet 'love' and 'submission'. He ends with another 'love' and 'respect'. We have seen that the love he has in mind for the husband sacrifices and serves with a view to enabling his wife to become what God intends her to be. So the 'submission'

¹⁷ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (pp. 229–230). InterVarsity Press.

¹⁸ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (pp. 230–231). InterVarsity Press.

and 'respect' he asks of the wife express her response to his love and her desire that he too will become what God intends him to be in his 'leadership'."¹⁹

At the end of the day, in all the things I can bring to the marriage or not bring to the marriage, THE most important thing I need to bring is JESUS! The point of everything is JESUS, and the answer to everything is JESUS! So as a husband, the thing I need to measure everything by is Jesus, therefore,

Challenge: To the husbands, how well is your life influencing your wife and kids to WANT to know and follow Jesus? Wives, are you making it easy or difficult for your husband to love you and influence you to know and follow Jesus?

If we get that right in marriage, it will pull everything else into place!

And listen, I know you can't make anyone follow Jesus, but our lives do influence whether they are willing to consider it. I can't make my wife and kids sincerely love the Lord, but my life and leadership are either good reasons for them to consider it or not consider it. Therefore, if you have no relationship with Jesus, it means you have no influence at all in what matters most! It means if I have a hypocritical religious relationship with Jesus, then no matter what, I'm going to have a negative influence on their desire to want to know and follow Jesus. If I'm silent about my relationship, especially while being open about everything else in my life, it tells my wife and family that knowing and following Jesus isn't important. If I give little to no priority to how much of my time, talent, and treasure are invested into a local body of Christ (a local church), then it tells my family that Christ's work in and through His body isn't important and that God's Word that commands it doesn't have to be followed when you don't feel like it.

These are things of greatest impact on a family and by far the greatest reason I could ever imagine to get my marriage straight, because if I can't love my wife as Christ loves the church, then there is no way on the planet I can influence her or my kids to what is most important—Jesus!

¹⁹ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (p. 231). InterVarsity Press.