

Marriage: The Tie That Frees • Part 3

The Roles Of Marriage • Ephesians 5:22-30

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Cats & Dogs*

1. I got this this week and just have to share it with you
2. What is a cat?
 - a. cats do what they want
 - b. they rarely listen to you
 - c. they're totally unpredictable
 - d. they whine when they're not happy
 - e. when you want to play, they want to be alone
 - f. when you want to be alone, they want to play
 - g. they expect you to cater to their every whim
 - h. they're moody
 - i. they leave their hair everywhere
 - j. they drive you nuts and cost an arm and a leg
 - k. **Conclusion:** they're tiny women in little fur coats!
3. What is a dog?
 - a. dogs lie around all day, sprawled on the most comfortable piece of furniture in the house
 - b. they can hear a package of food opening half a block away, but don't hear you when you're in the same room
 - c. they can look dumb and lovable at the same time
 - d. they growl when they're not happy
 - e. when you want to play, they want to play
 - f. when you want to be alone, they want to play
 - g. they're great at begging
 - h. they will love you forever if you fill their tummies with treats
 - i. they leave their toys everywhere
 - j. they do disgusting things with their mouths and then want to kiss you
 - k. **Conclusion:** They're tiny men in little fur coats!

B. *Different*

1. Men and women are different!
2. And in marriage, they have different roles
 - a. the wife has a role and responsibilities that are unique to her
 - b. just as the husband has a role and responsibilities unique to him
3. These unique roles aren't decided by us
4. Society doesn't write the job description for husbands and wives
5. These things are set by God and are a part of the creation

C. *Today*

1. Last week we took a look at the role of the wife
2. And I understand that we sold more tapes last Sunday than we have ever sold for any message
3. The bookstore people said that it was a long line of men buying the tape
4. I guess that's because I warned the men NOT to remind their wives they are supposed to submit
5. They just bought the tape and played it night and day
6. Well, if that's true, then we can expect a long line of ladies in the bookstore today to get a copy of this morning's message
7. Because today we're seeing what the lord say to the husband about his role
8. Let me begin with a brief recap of what we've seen so far in our series on marriage
 - a. the *purpose* of marriage is to solve the problem of loneliness
 - b. the *goal* of marriage is intimacy - where two become one
 - c. the *role of the wife* is to *submit* to her husband
 - 1) and last week we saw that this submission, as it's defined in scripture, is very far from the weak kind of "roll over and play deadism" that many people think of
 - 2) it's a tough minded determination to defer to the husband and honor his role as the God appointed head of the home
 - 3) it's patterned after our submission to Christ which is neither weak *nor* passive
 - 4) it's a strong and joyous desire to lift Him up and affirm His headship
9. Now, to the husband, Paul says . . .

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 25

{25} Husbands, love your wives,

1. Now, let's face it, us men would love it if it ended right there!
2. "Love my wife? No problem!"
3. It's like the farmer who was playing checkers with a friend and in between moves said,
 - a. "Martha and I been married fer fiddy years"
 - b. "I love that woman so much, it's all I can do to keep from tellin' 'er."
4. But Paul doesn't end here - he goes on to show HOW a husband is to love his wife

{25} Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

5. That's a different story!
6. How did Jesus show his love for us? He went to the cross!
 - a. He gave Himself up -
 - b. all the way!
7. A husband's love isn't merely something he *feels* for his wife
 - a. it isn't to be left limited to an internal emotion

- b. it's to work itself out in practical acts
 - c. and how far does it go? What is its limit?
 - d. there isn't one - it goes *all the way*
8. Now, Paul knows that this is a bit abstract for men
- a. we can grasp the *concept* of loving our wives like Jesus loved the church
 - b. but as we do, we think of that in very manly terms
 - c. we think of the cross - we think of dying
 - d. so we picture ourselves showing our wives our love by throwing ourselves in front of a runaway car to save them
 - e. we see ourselves performing some heroic act of self-sacrifice,
 - 1) we're at the bank and there's a robbery and our wife is grabbed as a hostage
 - 2) but we get up off the floor and offer to trade ourselves for our her - No, take me hostage; let her go
 - 3) then the robbery goes badly, and as one of the robbers swings his gun to shoot, we see the bead being drawn on our wife and jump in the way to catch the bullet intended for her
 - 4) as we lie dying on the ground, the blood flowing from the wound, we look up into her eyes and slowly form the words; the last we will ever say, "I love you!"
 - f. so heroic - so manly
9. But that isn't really what Paul has in mind
10. So he goes on . . .

B. Vs. 25-30

{25} Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

{26} that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

1. Far from saving up all our love and then showing it to our wives in one manly, heroic act, we are to love them in the midst of *daily life*, in the small as well as big things
2. Jesus didn't save up His love for us and then expend it all at the cross
 - a. His whole life and ministry was a constant and steady expression of love
 - b. it's hard to imagine Jesus spending 33 years sitting on the couch with the remote in his hand watching TV, then getting up just when it was time to go to the Cross
 - b. the incarnation itself was an expression of love
 - c. think of it - God the Son, enthroned in glory, bearing all the rights and prerogatives of deity, laid it aside to wrap himself in humble human flesh
 - d. all so that He could touch us, so he could bring hope and healing to sick, broken people
 - e. this man, who is God, the Master of all things, girds Himself with a towel, and kneels at the feet of a dozen men who sit there dumbfounded while he washes their feet!
 - f. there is probably no scene beside the cross, that is a greater contradiction than this

- g. but it is precisely the picture Paul is painting here for husbands
- 3. Just as Jesus loved *and so served* the church - the husband is to love and *serve* his wife
- 4. V. 24 says that Jesus *sanctified and cleansed* the church
 - a. to *sanctify* means to set something apart as special
 - 1) a husband is to treat his wife as special
 - 2) he needs to diligently relate to her in a manner that is unlike anyone else
 - 3) she should know that next to Jesus, no one else even comes close in his affection and attention
 - 4) Peter writes of this same thing in 1 Pet 3:7 when he tells husbands to give honor to the wife as to a weaker vessel

Husbands, give honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel

- a) we are going to be looking at the verse more next week
- b) but this morning notice that this is another passage that has been misunderstood
- c) Peter is NOT saying the woman is inferior!
- d) on the contrary, he is calling for the husband to show his wife a *special honor*
- e) he is to recognize her specialness and treat her with tenderness
- f) the words he uses picture two vessels
 - 1) one is a plastic bucket you use to either wash the car out of or mix paint in - it's utilitarian and tough - you keep it in the garage
 - 2) that's the husband!
 - 3) the other is a fragile vase - it's a delicate glass that's meant to hold a flower - it's kept in the house, in a prominent place
 - 4) that's the wife
 - 5) Peter paints the picture of the husband tenderly and carefully lifting the wife up and placing her on a pedestal so that she might be put in a place of protection, safe from the things that might damage her
- g) giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel is him in the act of lifting her up and making her feel special, because in his mind she is, and he shows it in the way he treats her
- 5) this is how husbands can sanctify their wives
- b. Paul also says that Jesus cleansed us with the washing of water by the word
 - 1) He knew His mission was to save us and then bring us into a life whose end was to be conformed to His image
 - 2) in the same way, husbands are to realize that they have a duty toward their wives in leading them in spiritual things
 - 3) as we saw last week, God has appointed the husband as head of the home
 - a) this isn't a role he appoints himself to; it's not one he wrests from his wife
 - b) God assigns him this role and the responsibilities that go with it
 - 4) therefore, the husband is responsible for leading his wife in spiritual things

- 5) just as Jesus served the church by faithfully ministering the Word of God to us, so husbands are to be diligent in serving their wives in being the priest of their home and marriage
 - 6) now, let me say from personal experience and from endless talks with men over the years - it seems this is one of the most difficult things for a lot of men
 - a) many men who are good, solid, mature believers find it extremely difficult to take the spiritual leadership in their marriages
 - b) the extent of it is just getting their family to church on Sundays
 - c) the idea and discipline of sitting down weekly to read the bible and pray together is like pulling teeth
 - d) and when you come right down to it, it's really hard to say *why* it's so hard
 - 7) I think I know the reason - it's really quite obvious - Satan doesn't want husbands loving their wives in this way so he puts up a tremendous fight
 - 8) we feel that resistance - it's like a spiritual brick wall that we find it hard in the extreme to break through
 - 9) here's why the devil raises such opposition - he knows how much wives long for their husbands to do this
 - a) God has made the man to be the head, the leader, the initiator
 - b) conversely, the wife is a responder and she is most content when she sees her man leading skillfully and wisely
 - c) when a husband sets a regular time for them to pursue their spiritual growth TOGETHER, it opens up a new level of security in her that allows her to give herself in greater freedom to her husband
 - d) when he sees this, it empowers him to be more of the man that God intends for him
 - e) as they become stronger in this part of their lives and marriage, it further shuts the door on the enemy's access to their lives
 - f) this is why he makes it so difficult for husbands to lead their wives in spiritual things
 - g) specially in spending time together in reading and prayer
 - 11) men - close that door!
 - 12) read and pray with your wives
 5. Don't save up your love for some noble & heroic once in a lifetime act of self sacrifice
 6. Your wife needs to see your love in the things of daily life
 7. Genuine heroism isn't defined by an impetuous act: it's a life lived in humble service of a noble cause
 8. And marriage is one of the noblest of them all!
 9. So make her special and treat her as special, and realize the role you play in leading her in spiritual things
 10. But there's more . . .
- {27} that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**

{28} So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

11. All the service Christ gave the church, all the love, all the devotion and sacrifice, in the end will go to His own glory
12. In precisely the same way, all of a husband's love and service of his wife will end up benefiting him
 - a. why?
 - b. because as the wife is built up and blessed, God has made it so that she will respond to her husband and bless him
13. Last week we saw that the wife is called to submit to her husband, to defer to him and follow his lead
14. We showed how a man *needs* this submission from his wife; it empowers him to become the man God wants him to be
15. In the same way, a husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church because as he does this, it empowers her to become the woman God wants her to be
16. A husband *needs* submission, a wife *needs* sacrificial love
17. Think about it:
 - a. as the wife submits to her husband, she becomes *vulnerable*
 - b. the decisions he makes will affect her
 - c. but if he is loving her as Paul describes that love here, she is going to have confidence in his leadership because she knows he is taking careful and tender thought toward her
 - d. I have yet to meet a woman who wouldn't gladly submit to her husband if she had the confidence he was loving her as Paul describes it here
 - e. look at it . . .

v. 28 = husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies

18. I think Paul is just plain being totally honest here -
19. You see, guys are pretty simple: we like to eat, sleep and play
20. We're real, real good at knowing what we want and we think about ourselves a lot
21. Paul is saying, "Husbands - just as you take care of and think about your own needs, show the same kind of care for your mate."
 - a. if you get up to get yourself a bowl of ice cream, ask her if she wants one, or something else
 - b. are you cold and decide to go get a sweater, ask her if she needs one
 - c. when you sleep in do you hate it if she makes noise and wakes you up?
Then don't leave the bathroom door open when you take a shower
22. Let's face it guys - we know what we want - but are we as diligent to know what our wives want and then show the same kind of effort to serve them that we do our own selves
23. If a man does this, if he can show his wife that he had a mind to serve her tenderly, she will gladly respond and submit to him
24. Paul goes on . . .

{29} For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

{30} For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

15. The analogy between the relationship of Christ and the church and marriage goes on into an even deeper level
16. In these verses, Paul reveals the depths to which marital intimacy should go, and that it's the husband's duty to take it there
17. Just as we take thought to our own well-being, so husbands and wives must see that they really are united in a union or oneness
 - a. just as Christ is IN the Church and the Church is IN Christ
 - b. the marital relationship places the husband and wife IN each other

C. Romance

1. What Paul is describing in these verses defining the role of the husband, is something that women know intuitively but most men scratch their head over
2. And that's *romance!*
3. Romance is not the sickeningly sweet and sentimental goo you see portrayed in novels and B movies
4. Real romance is found in what we've just looked at
5. Over the years I've looked for a good definition for romance
 - a. I've asked men and women alike to give me their definition
 - b. and while several women have been able to give an answer -
 - c. the men just look at me like I'm speaking a foreign language
6. After all this time, I think I've found what romance is - and as I said, it's drawn from this passage
7. Romance is the environment that's created between lovers when they know that whether together or apart, each one is thinking tenderly about the other - there isn't a decision made that isn't first passed through the question of what's best for the other
8. Where there is romance, there is the constant expression of this thoughtfulness
9. Paul spells this out and calls husbands to it because a wife thrives on it!
10. Guys typically look at romance this way:
 - a. it's a tool they use to win her hand
 - b. they show themselves to be romantic because they know she's a sucker for it
 - c. so when they're dating he sends her cards and flowers
 - 1) he calls her in the middle of the day to say "Hi."
 - 2) when he picks her up for a date there's a single red rose waiting on the dashboard in his immaculately washed, waxed, and vacuumed car
 - 3) he's gone out and purchased a Kenny G and John Tesh CD just to play for nice romantic music as they drive to the Olive Garden for Caesar salads and then LA for the ballet
 - 4) she is swept off her feet by his charm and romantic poise as he tips the valet and gives her his arm so they can stroll into the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
 - 5) "What a catch," she thinks to herself
 - d. but you know what he's thinking? "I hope she appreciates all this and thinks I'm cool."

- e. she does, and several months later when he asks her to marry him, she gladly replies, YES!
 - f. in his mind, he's won her - the tool called romance did it's job, so it's time to hang it up
 - g. after the wedding day, instead of a rose it's a new broom, the car rarely gets washed, and instead of Kenny G and John Tesh it's the Beastie Boys and Metallica
 - h. Caesar salads at the Olive Garden turn in to Big Macs at MacDonalds
 - i. and in place of the ballet in LA it's South Park on the tellie
11. She wants to know where the romance went
 12. She thought all the stuff he did before was advertising for the kind of life she would enjoy forever
 13. But now she realizes it was false advertising and feels defrauded
 14. Husband - love your wife!
 - a. love her like Christ loves the church
 - b. make sure your thoughts toward her are special and tender
 - c. then *treat* her that way
 - d. take the leadership that is already yours and apply it in spending time with your wife reading and praying
 - e. show here in the things of daily life, show that you are thinking of her and that in all the decisions and the choices you make, you ask yourself what is best for her
 - f. this is the essence of the romance she needs and that will enable her to blossom and grow as a wife and as a woman

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Learning To Love Like That*

1. I want to end with a true story told by Richard Selzer, in the book *Mortal Lessons*
2. It well captures the kind of self-sacrificial love that Paul calls us to as husbands
...

I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face postoperative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed. The surgeon had followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh; I promise you that. Nevertheless, to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had cut the little nerve.

Her young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed, and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. Who are they, I ask myself, he and this wrymouth I have made, who gaze at and touch each other so generously?

The young woman speaks. "Will my mouth always be like this?" she asks.

"Yes," I say, "it will. It's because the nerve was cut."

She nods, and is silent. But the young man smiles. "I like it," he says. "It is kind of cute."

All at once I know who he is. I understand, and I lower my gaze. One is not bold in an encounter with a real man. Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth, and I am so close I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers, to show her that their kiss still works.

3. We who are husbands are given the privilege of loving like Jesus loved
 - a. He loved us and died for us while we were imperfect
 - b. even more, while we were rank sinners
 - c. we have the awesome opportunity to enter into that kind of love in our relationship with our wives
 - d. their perfection is not the condition of our love
 - e. rather, God ordains that your love will *lead* to her perfection
- = 4. But that love is not mere human love - it's from God . . .